

SUPPORTING READING COMPREHENSION IN ELEMENTARY CLASSROOMS
THROUGH PROCESS DRAMA

by

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this graduating paper is on the use of process drama and the many benefits the strategy has in the elementary classroom. The first part of this study explores some of the recent literature about process drama. Specifically, I take a close look at the writings of Booth (1985), Fels & Belliveau (2008), Heathcote (1969), Neelands & Goode (2008), and O' Neill (1995) among others. The second part of my paper suggests ways in which process drama can be used in the classroom to support student learning (more specifically reading). In this section I provide sample activities and strategies that are illustrated with specific picture books: *The Cello of Mr. O* (Cutler, 1999), *The Bomb and The General* (Eco, 1989), *Rose Blanche* (Innocenti, 1985), and *The Composition* (Skármeta, 1998). There are also quick references provided for the activities detailed in the paper for teacher/facilitator use, as well as assessment suggestions.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	v
SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Purpose and Questions for the Project.....	3
Theoretical Framework.....	3
Definition of Terms.....	4
SECTION 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	5
Process Drama.....	5
Drama, Literacy, and Education.....	7
Drama as a Social Process.....	10
Drama as a Subject and Medium in Education.....	11
Resistance to Drama in Education.....	12
Summary.....	13
SECTION 3: CONNECTIONS TO PRACTICE.....	16
Why I Chose These Picturebooks.....	16
Connecting Themes.....	17
Books and Activities.....	18
Curricular Connections.....	27
Evaluation.....	30
Closing Remarks.....	31
SECTION 4: CONCLUSIONS.....	32

REFERENCES.....	33
Appendix A: Activity Quick References.....	35

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

After taking several courses in drama in education, I am curious about the possibilities of drama in literacy and language arts instruction. Having been a theatre and drama student in high school and throughout my post-secondary career, I have been privy to the powerful sense of community and engagement that drama is able to enact amongst a group of people. My personal experience with drama and the performing of my understanding was immensely rewarding and challenging at times. From gaining insight into new teaching approaches to feelings of individual and communal accomplishment, I have been left with the firm belief that drama is worth exploring and doing in our classrooms.

As the eldest daughter in an immigrant Chinese family, I was expected to be practical and set a "proper" example for my two younger siblings. My initial forays into drama and theatre were humored by my parents, but when my passion for it became too noticeable to attribute to a passing hobby, my parents became concerned and let me know decisively that they did not intend for me to have a career in the creative arts and that "acting" does not make for a secure future. What my parents did not necessarily see nor understand was that being involved in drama and theatre is not solely limited to acting or "the stage." There is a wealth of experience and a different way of knowing that occurs within drama that is separate and different from what may be gleaned from reading a textbook for hours on end.

I have experienced the impact that drama can have on a student's ability to understand and the enrichment that the embodiment of understanding can render possible. I enjoy engaging in drama and theatre as a mode of inquiry and a tool for building understanding and I hope to be able to share this passion with my students through my teaching. After having tried on several occasions to introduce different drama techniques into my own classroom, I am ready to invest

more time and commit more energy to pursuing the use of drama in my teaching, specifically process drama.

For me, drama enables a group to engage in a social process that builds a sense of belonging, understanding, and supports openness to different viewpoints.

Dorothy Heathcote (1969) describes the power of drama in education and how a learner's subjective experiences are what help to illuminate and render personal the experiences of others.

If we are able to build personal connections that are physical, kinesthetic, and aesthetic for our students, perhaps we may be able to deepen their understanding of a text. Belliveau and Fels (2008) write about the possibilities for drama in education and the use of performative inquiry in the classroom to support student understanding across subject areas. Louise Rosenblatt's (1994) ideas of reader response theory lay the ground for the existence of each reader's individual response to a text based on personal experiences and memories. These individual experiences and responses are traditionally expressed through written responses and group discussions in the traditional classroom, which has created a limiting space for the voices of our students. For our English Language Learners who often get waylaid by the complexities of the English language in their efforts to express their own understanding, what can we offer them aside from black line masters that ask them to practice vocabulary that may be out of context and are meant to be make-work projects? Additionally, what about our many students who have learning needs and challenges in the area of language arts? How can we reach them and support their reading comprehension? How can we enable them to express their understanding beyond the written word that they seem to struggle with so much?

Purpose and questions for the project

The purpose of this paper is to review a selection of literature that discusses the use of drama/the arts in education. Specifically:

- What does the literature suggest about the ways in which drama can support reading, specifically in the area of comprehension?
- What novels intended for young readers lend themselves to interpretation/comprehension through drama; and,
- How can a teacher facilitate student interpretation/comprehension through drama?

Theoretical and Methodological Framework

Related to my views on drama in education is the methodology of A/r/tography (Irwin & Springgay, 2008; Leggo, 2008; Sameshima, 2008). A/r/tography as practice-based research looks at living inquiry through art and reflection, in and through time, as well as the roles of artist/researcher/teacher that a person embodies in varying degrees simultaneously. A/r/tography speaks to the way that I would like to approach my views and applications of (process) drama in education. This methodology informs the way in which I would like to conduct my teaching practice- as a form of living inquiry where learning and meaning are found in the spaces in-between self and other, environment and process, researcher and participants, questions and answers and still more questions. In my hopes of creating a practical application for the exploration of drama and literacy in the classroom, the practice of a/r/tography may help me to research, reflect and refine an approach that could be a very powerful tool and strategy.

Closely related to artography is poetic inquiry. According to Prendergast (2009), poetic inquiry seeks to authentically express human emotions, reactions, and experiences to the reader. It can be viewed as a form of qualitative research and abides by the same ethics in regards to

human participants as other forms of traditional research would. In addition, Prendergast (2009) also presents poetic inquiry as a way to present the work and thoughts of others (such as theory and experiences) through found poetry. My understanding of an article will be presented in such a way in a later section of this paper.

Definition of Terms

Process Drama: An unscripted form of drama done with a group to explore a topic, theme, or idea. A piece is created collaboratively by a group of individuals with a facilitator (often an instructor or teacher who may or may not have a concrete role in the piece) and rehearsed and refined. This piece may remain unfinished and may or may not be presented to a formal audience (O'Neill, 1995).

Mantle of the Expert: Pioneered by Dorothy Heathcote (1980), this is a drama strategy that allows individuals to take on a certain role (i.e. teacher, parent, scientist, etc.) and to engage in the exploration of a certain topic or idea from the standpoint of this imagined role. This strategy allows for an inquiry-based approach to learning that enriches understanding and strengthens engagement and involvement.

Hot-Seating: A strategy/form where a participant or pair of participants take on the role of a character and is then questioned by the rest of the group about his/her motivations within the context of certain events or situations. Hot-Seating is not meant to be scripted and is used to develop and expand characters and also to hone the ability to ask effective and meaningful questions (Neelands & Goode, 2008).

Still-Images/Tableau: A strategy/process where individuals or groups construct a frozen picture using their bodies (and usually little else) to represent an idea, situation, interaction, or emotion. Participants construct their frozen images in role and the intended message is sometimes left

open to the interpretation of the audience/viewer. This process is often used to explore themes, conflicts, and characters in greater depth (Neelands & Goode, 2008).

Image Theatre: Pioneered by Boal (1995), image theatre aims to explore oppression of groups of people and conflict. Participants form a circle and are offered a theme (i.e. poverty) and asked to sculpt their bodies or a partner's body into an image that represents an idea or reaction related to the theme. These images are then brought together and put in motion by adding sound and/or connecting still images that have been made by other participants (Neelands & Goode, 2008).

The following section offers a review of theoretical perspectives and research findings pertinent to this paper.

SECTION 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Process Drama

Cecily O'Neill (1995) likens process drama to improvisation, that is, process drama is often unscripted and therefore does not necessarily follow a predictable pattern. However, where improvisation and process drama diverge is in the shape that it takes over time. Improvisation usually consists of short or brief scenes or "games," whereas process drama (while unscripted) focuses on important or pivotal moments that are dis/uncovered and are then explored, structured, rehearsed, and presented in some way, shape, or form.

Another distinction that O'Neill (1995) makes between improvisation and process drama is that improvisation tends to limit the number of participants at any given time, whereas process drama has the propensity to include all of the members present in the same endeavour, with the teacher acting as facilitator and participant interchangeably. There is also no overt pressure to "perform" within the context of a process drama. A group does not necessarily begin a process drama with the express intention of performing for an outside audience, rather, the experience (and not the outcome) of building the process drama and creating the understanding that comes along the way is the focus.

What is key for O'Neill (1985, 1995) is that the process drama that is enacted to support literature or curriculum should not be valued for the sole purpose of supporting that curricular goal. If that is the case, there is no guarantee of an authentic drama experience. The process drama will not live and breathe as the students experience it; rather, it will become something that is teacher-centred, disconnected, brief, and fragmented thereby going against the sense of aesthetic that would create an enduring and powerful process drama experience for the students. It would appear to be more of a "throw-in" than a true drama or piece of theatre.

A particularly useful handbook of drama strategies for the creation of process drama work is Neelands & Goode's *Structuring Drama Work: A handbook of available forms in theatre and drama* (2008). This handbook includes forms such as Mantle of the Expert, Hot-Seating, and Still-Images/Tableau (p.25, 33, 34). These three forms are some of the more readily accessible (while not necessarily lower-risk) forms employed in process drama. Several forms or strategies are employed throughout process drama to facilitate the "peeling away" (Booth, 1985, p.193) of the layers of potential meaning within a given context or topic.

Theatre and drama forms are not necessarily the only modes of meaning-making within a process drama. There is also great potential and necessity for the inclusion of other forms of expression and meaning-making. Drawing, writing, photos, multimedia/technology, and music/sound can all be part of a process drama and only serve to support a richer and more fulfilling drama experience for the participants.

Drama, Literacy, and Education

Louise Rosenblatt (1994) discusses the interaction between reader and text and how readers must and will necessarily bring their own emotions, imagination, culture, background, experiences, and ideas to their interpretation of a text. For Rosenblatt (1994) there are many possible readings of a text and no single meaning found within it is more important than another. This view of reader response would seem to support the use of drama in the teaching of literacy. Drama strategies would allow for the many perspectives that may be explicit and implicit within a text to be explored, discussed, and "lived" in the classroom. These possibilities might allow for a greater range of access and personal interaction and engagement with the text in a classroom situation versus a didactic delivery of what the "moral" of the text may be according to the adult.

Booth (1985) asserts that drama helps to support children in reading by creating new shared and deeper understandings of what has been read. However, he cautions that drama should not be isolated as a post-reading activity in its use because it is, by its own right, a powerful learning medium where children can create authentic and meaningful learning experiences. Furthermore, Booth (1985) points out that confident and strong readers are able to grapple with text to find meaning based on background experience and knowledge, drama can play a crucial role in encouraging readers to explore further and to ask “what if” questions so that more and more layers of meaning may be uncovered.

For Fels & Belliveau (2008), drama as a form of performative inquiry in education stems from Gardner's (1983, 1999) theory of multiple intelligences, Waldrop's (1992) ideas of complexity theory and enactivism (Varela, 1987). Within teaching and learning there are relationships and these relationships exist within frameworks in an environment that, at once affects and informs those within it, and is simultaneously affected and informed by those who are present in it, and all this occurs over time (Fels & Belliveau, 2008).

Wilhelm (1998) believes that drama is one of the most powerful tools in teaching and has used drama in many different contexts to support literacy in reluctant and resistant readers as well as across other subject areas to enhance and enrich learning and to initiate meaningful discussions about important and significant issues in culture, history, and politics. For Wilhelm (1998), drama allows students to take on another person's perspective and allows for experimentation and exploration of a new character or idea in an embodied and expressive way.

Leonora Macy (2004) followed one Grade 4 classroom teacher's experience with conducting a novel study through a variety of drama strategies in order to motivate, connect, and deepen her students' reading of a text. Macy (2004) grounds her research in Rosenblatt's (1994)

transactional theory of reading and uses this theory as the basis of her observations and conclusions in her article. Macy (2004) found that students were highly motivated and invested in their readings and interpretations of the text. Any drama work they did, they engaged in without fear since it was their creation, their interpretation, and employed their evaluative skills (Macy, 2004). Macy (2004) also noticed the ways in which the students were using and interacting with language and literacy through the dramatic activities that their teacher led them through. As each dramatic activity unfolded, the teacher that Macy (2004) observed could see the development of her students' literacy skills in reading, listening, and speaking. Macy (2004) also observed, alongside the classroom teacher, that the students learned about register, in a firsthand, contextualized way, through taking on different roles, which was akin to what Heathcote (1969) suggested is a benefit of engaging with drama in the classroom with children.

Schneider (2000), who was both a participant-researcher in a study of an elementary teacher's experiences using process drama to support literacy, found that the students engaged in many forms of contextualized writing. These writing activities all stemmed from the class process drama activities. These "imaginary contexts" (Schneider, 2000, p. 49) facilitated the emergence of many different forms of writing for many different purposes. It can be argued that because the contexts for the students' writing was imagined, that it might render the writing experiences inauthentic; however, the engagement with the curriculum that these students experienced through the process drama seemed clearly genuine and meaningful (Schneider, 2000).

Thus far, the articles have been focused on holistic language learning experiences with drama giving imaginary contexts and access points into supporting reading and writing as a whole. McMaster (1998) discusses the use of drama to build more skill-specific elements of

literacy like decoding, vocabulary, syntax, discourse, and metacognition. She goes on to assert that "drama is an invaluable tool for educators because it is one of the few vehicles of instruction that can support every aspect of literacy development" (McMaster, 1998, p. 575). McMaster (1998) argues that drama also creates an even ground on which all learners can express and communicate their knowledge and opinions and feel a sense of self-worth. Additionally, McMaster argues that reducing the anxiety attached to producing the "correct" answer will also improve student engagement with, and access to, the activity and content (1998).

Rozansky & Aagesen (2010) incorporated *Image Theatre* into the classroom to support urban low-achieving readers in developing critical literacy skills. Rozansky & Aagesen (2010) wanted to show that this particular group of urban low-achieving readers was capable of engaging in and demonstrating critical literacy skills. What the two researchers found was that *Image Theatre*, as defined by Boal (1985), did promote critical literacy in these students and that they were able to communicate, negotiate, and empathize with issues of oppression through their *Image Theatre*. Rozansky & Aagesen (2010) were trying to counter the "pedagogy of poverty" (p.464) that labeled certain students as low-achievers due to poor performance on standardized tests. Rozansky & Aagesen (2010) also argued that drama, including other forms of the arts, allow for students who struggle with the conventional modes of communicating their understanding in schools the ability and chance to demonstrate their knowledge of text or content in a powerful way.

Drama as a Social Process

As Dorothy Heathcote (1969) asserts, drama deals with people being able to assume the role and emotions of another outside of themselves- another identity, if you will- in an effort to gain new understandings and insights (Sumara, 2002). Heathcote also states that, "drama cannot

properly function unless the children agree to tolerate generously, and put to work, differing personalities, points of view, information, speed of working, and levels of attention" (1969, p. 60). McMaster (1998) found, in a review of studies on the social effects of drama, that drama effectively supports and fosters collaboration, compassion, negotiation, empathy, and social tolerance in groups of learners. As a means of building connections and helping students to live, converse, and learn in relation with one another, their teachers, and their schools, it would seem that drama would be able to engage them on all of those levels when done successfully.

Drama is also necessarily a social process because it invites participants and audience members to collectively believe in an imaginary world (O'Neill, 1985). Audience members of a play or production are constantly aware of the physical environment or confines that they are in, but they agree to believe, as part of the social process of theatre and drama, that what they are viewing in front of them is momentarily real. When a process drama is being built by a group, there may not be a formal audience, but the other participants are observing and viewing the action that is occurring around them. There is an unspoken agreement amongst participants that they are in this process drama as a community. There are negotiations that happen in and out of role that drive the process drama in one direction or another. These all depend on the relationships that are created between the characters within the drama as well as the participants themselves within the space.

Drama as a Subject and Medium in Education

As a teacher in the public school system teaching upper-intermediate students, I am always looking for ways to support my students in their learning. In a school community with a high number of English Second Language learners (ESL students) and a highly transient student population, it is often challenging to build a learning community where each individual is able to

authentically make meaning in relation to texts and in cooperation with her or his peers. The traditional group novel study model of read aloud, comprehension activities, and large-group oral discussion is proving to be less and less effective in building deep understanding of and engagement with texts.

From personal experience, I have seen drama being taught in isolation from other curricular subjects and usually as a Friday afternoon activity with little substance and purpose. There are many reasons or benefits that Fels & Belliveau (2008) see for bringing performative inquiry, or drama, into the curriculum. They include:

- critical and creative problem solving
- collaboration and communication skills
- investigation of issues, concepts, and information within contextualized situations
- exposure to multiple perspectives and agendas
- long-term retention of learning
- increased motivation
- opportunity to draw on and apply personal experience and knowledge to situations and issues
- leadership skills and peer teaching
- effective learning strategy that engages students with different ability levels and interests
- active, embodied participation
- critical and reflective thinking
- performative literacy
- meaningful work and participation (Fels & Belliveau, 2008, p. 43)

These benefits provide a strong case for the incorporation of drama and performative inquiry, not just into literacy instruction, but also across all subject areas. This approach allows for a more creative and engaging approach to content that may make more sense for students and may situate concepts being taught in a manner that may be more accessible to our students. As such, it

seems to be a disservice to ourselves (as educators in the public elementary school system) and our students if we do not try to shift the way we view our instructional options and approaches.

Resistance to Drama in Education

Wilhelm (1998) met with resistance at a particular school when he mentioned the use of drama. Many of the teachers did not believe that students at their school would willingly engage in drama activities and they themselves did not seem to see how drama could be applied in their particular discussion about technology. However, Wilhelm (1998) found that there is a natural propensity for children and adults alike to pretend and take on roles informally, often engaging in drama without knowing it or calling it so. Perhaps it is the vocabulary and misunderstandings and preconceptions around the idea of drama that have many educators and students wary of applying it in the classroom. Or perhaps it is the lack of exposure or professional development in schools that renders drama into something unapproachable and intimidating? I think that there needs to be a clear differentiation between theater and drama, in other words, between the formal and informal drama so that teachers and students alike may feel invited to participate rather than feeling as if they need to keep drama at arm's length.

Summary

This literature review is not exhaustive. It is a preliminary look at what a group of scholars have written about in the area of drama in education and drama and literacy. Looking forward, the potential for drama, process drama, *Image Theatre* (Boal, 1979) seems to need further exploration. There also seems to be a lack of professional development opportunities and programs that have been documented at the individual school or district level where educators may experience and grapple with the use of drama in education in a practical context. What might education look like for our students if more teachers were comfortable with incorporating

drama effectively into their instruction? How might drama change the attitudes of our reluctant learners and how our students may demonstrate their learning and understanding?

In the context of literacy, drama seems to create many avenues of connection for students in the literature reviewed thus far. A strong case has been made for the use and incorporation of drama into a literacy or language arts program in the classroom as it enables the exploration of multiple perspectives, collaboration, empathy, and critical literacy skills (Heathcote, 1969; Macy, 2004; McMaster, 1998; Rozansky & Aagesen, 2010; Schneider, 2000; Wilhelm, 1998).

Ultimately, I would like to be able to help my students to feel more ownership over their learning, their understanding, and the way that they can engage with the content. I believe that drama has the potential for this and my aim is to explore how drama can support the variety of learners and learning styles, cultures and experiences, reading and writing abilities, and creative propensities in my classroom.

I would like to leave the reader with a piece of original *found poetry* gleaned from the work of Dorothy Heathcote (1969).

drama

children/teachers!

become

somebody else

see

how it feels

crystallizing

information

associations

conflicts

heated, not cold, circumstances draw
upon willing suspension
of disbelief
crises, the turning points in life
large and small
teachers/children!
reflect.
take
roles
take
note
total darkness/light
total stillness/movement
total silence/sound
infinitesimal mixtures
look.
listen.
discover all the possibilities

SECTION 3: CONNECTIONS TO PRACTICE

The following is an annotated bibliography of select picturebooks that lend themselves to process drama activities. The basic structures were drawn from *Structuring Drama Work: A Handbook of Available Forms in Drama and Theatre* (Neelands & Goode, 2008) and were adapted to suit the picturebook being discussed. Not all of the suggested activities need to be done in the sequence in which they have been laid out and not all of them have to be done in their entirety. This bibliography is meant to give the reader a sense of what is possible when working with a picturebook and process drama. While evaluation is on-going and constantly taking place, I have chosen to discuss points for evaluation and curricular connections near the end of the bibliography so that the reader may focus on and visualize the activities first and thus be able to have a better frame of reference. For practical purposes, one-page outlines of each book and its respective activities have been included in the appendices of this paper. They are meant as guidelines or quick references when doing the activities. For greater detail, examples of prompts, points for evaluation, or further explanation, teachers/facilitators can refer to the annotated bibliography.

Why I Chose These Picturebooks

The focus age group for this annotated bibliography is Grade 6 and 7. The picturebooks chosen are not too simple or too complex for this age group to understand and connect with. The picturebooks tell stories of oppression and the experiences of war from different and varied perspectives. The main characters in most of the selected stories are children and this lends an immediate connecting point for the students from which to enter the story. The main characters, with the exception of *The Atom and The General* (Eco, 1989), are all shown doing activities that many of our students would engage in on a daily basis, thereby making them accessible and

more tangible for students. There is a range of illustration styles in each book and the vivid colours and imaginative portrayals of the text also help to build visual engagement and visual literacy for students.

These picturebooks also offer many turning points or pivotal moments which can be fruitfully explored through process drama strategies. The main characters in each book also offer plenty of material with which students can grapple, particularly around the idea of internal and external conflicts. The context of the respective stories allow students to extrapolate their explorations to a wider context, which includes their own lives and the world at large.

Connecting Themes

There are a number of common themes that run throughout the picturebooks chosen for this bibliography:

- War and oppression
- Courage
- Hope
- Family and relationships
- Doing what is right/standing up for your beliefs

These themes could be explored using all of the picturebooks discussed or the teacher may choose to highlight these thematic connections with a few of the books and supplement these with others. To explore all of the picturebooks below as a thematic unit, the teacher could do some of the activities for all of the books, rather than just one and help students to uncover connections between characters and stories as they move through the process. For example, *Role on the Wall* might be something that is done for a selection of the main characters in each story

at the end and connections, discussions, and drama work may arise from the engagement in that activity.

Books and Activities

For those who are just beginning to use drama in their classroom, it might be helpful to begin with *The Cello of Mr. O* (Cutler, 1999) to help scaffold some of the dramatic processes and strategies that are discussed in other books like *The Composition* (Skármeta, 1998) where the conflicts, problems, and contexts may be a bit more unfamiliar to (most) students. The suggested activities outlined for Cutler's (1999) book are laid out in a sequence where the level of risk-taking (for both teacher and students) is increased gradually. This provides an environment where the drama can be built subtly and the story and characters can be explored in great depth without too much anxiety.

Book Title	Author	Illustrator
<i>The Cello of Mr. O</i>	Jane Cutler	Greg Couch
Synopsis		
Living in a war-torn city, a little girl struggles with her anger over the situation. Bombs have devastated buildings and it is not safe for her to play outside. An old man, Mr. O, lives in her apartment building and the little girl and her friends entertain themselves by pestering him and playing tricks on him. One day, after another bombing that stops the relief truck deliveries, Mr. O surprises the little girl and everyone else who lives in the city by taking his cello into the middle of the city square and playing beautiful music. He does this every day and lifts the spirits of all those who can hear his music. Even when his cello gets destroyed, Mr. O still finds a way to bring music, courage, and hope to the residents of the city.		
Suggested Activities		
• Visualization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - read aloud the first 3 pages of the text and ask students to imagine the scene with their eyes closed (some may choose to put their heads down on their desks) - at the end of the pages, remind students to keep their eyes closed and circulate through the room - ask students to think of the sounds, sights, smells, and tastes they may have seen as they were listening to the beginning of the story - tap students on the shoulder and ask them to share, with their eyes closed, a single word 		

- that would help them describe what they see/sense in their visualization of the setting
- after several students have shared their single words, explain that they will also be thinking about how it feels to live in a place like that
- give students a few minutes to think of a single word to describe how they might feel to have to live in the same place
- revisit some of the sense words that students shared before asking volunteers to share their emotion words in the second round
- you could build on this visualization activity by doing an art piece using different colours to represent the mood of the beginning of the story and the physical descriptions of the setting

• Living Sculptures

- this activity would be done at the close of the book to check, build, and deepen comprehension
- in groups of 3, students will decide on who will be partner A, B, and C
- once they have claimed their letters, reveal that partner A will be responsible for sculpting the beginning of the story, partner B the middle of the story, and partner C the end of the story
- without speech or touch, the sculptor for each section must use body language and miming to show his/her partners how to position their bodies
- remind students to think about different levels, facial expressions, and their gazes
- once the partners have been positioned, the sculptor must then place him/herself into the sculpture
- when the first section of the story has been sculpted, switch to a different sculptor and proceed in the same fashion
- each group will share their living sculptures in sequence and hold each sculpture for 1 to 2 minutes for the audience to get the full effect before smoothly transitioning into the next sculpture
- remind students that this is not meant to be a “guessing game” of which moment is being portrayed, rather it is a representation of which moments, the group thought were important in the beginning, middle, and end of the story
- continue to share each group’s sculptures until all groups have shared their sequence
- debrief at the end by discussing some of the choices that were made and what made each sculptor feel that those particular moments were important to sculpt and share (this is a sharing session, not a debate or a close text analysis)
- you could also discuss what made things the sculpting process more difficult or easier for each sculptor

• Talk Show

- at the end of the story, arrange to have 5 volunteers ready to take on certain roles from the book (these roles contain a higher element of risk so students/participants who have shown more confidence throughout may be a good place to start), ask them to wait for you outside of the room

- explain to the class that you have invited several characters from the book to participate in a “Question and Answer” period
- audience members will be writing 3 questions each (building questioning skills) that they would be able to pose to each guest
- as teacher/facilitator, you would be mediator/talk show host
- scaffold by reviewing events of story and coming up with a few sample questions as a large group, review effective questioning
- while students are writing their questions, assign roles to the volunteer guests outside the room (the little girl, Mr. O, an adult neighbour, relief truck driver, a child that lives in the same building, or others that you come up with or feel would be appropriate)
- give the students name tags for their roles so that audience members know who to direct the questions to
- reenter the room in role as the talk show host and welcome audience to the show before inviting the guests to take a seat at the front of the room
- as talk show host, introduce each guest and then open the floor to questions from the audience
- monitor responses and remind guests that their answers should build on their understanding of what has happened in the book and that they might be able to reveal information that was not readily apparent from the reading of the story
- monitor questions and remind audience that the questioning should elicit answers other than “yes” or “no” and that if they think of questions that stem from previous responses, they should ask them of the guest
- to build belief, be prepared to dress the part and perhaps use a microphone as a prop
- debrief by asking students to do a quick write about something that they learned about the story/characters that they did not know before or about something that was confirmed for them through the process of the talk show

In Skármeta’s (1998) picture book, *The Composition* the political environment of the main character Pedro’s home is uncovered subtly without affectation or sentimentality. The activities that are proposed for this book are meant to mirror the tone of the story and the development of Pedro’s character. The first activity of *Role on the Wall* is described as being done throughout the story; however, if it suits the group to only engage in this strategy at one point and not the other that should be the teacher’s prerogative. As with Cutler’s book, the activities below range from low, medium, to high risk for the participants.

Book Title	Author	Illustrator
<i>The Composition</i>	Antonio Skármeta	Alfonso Ruano
Synopsis		
<p>Pedro is a boy living in a South American country with his mother and father. He dreams of becoming a famous soccer player like Pele. His country is under military rule and he slowly comes to learn about the harsh reality of living under a dictatorship through different events, like the arrest of his friend Daniel's father. Pedro's real test comes when his class is asked by a military general to write about what their family does at night with the promise of a reward. Faced with the knowledge that his parents are against the dictatorship, Pedro must make the difficult decision of what to write about in his essay for the general.</p>		
Suggested Activities		
<p>• Role on the Wall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - create 3 life-sized paper cut outs of a boy and post them up around the room - label one cut out with the word "Beginning," the second with "Middle," and the last with "End." - after reading the first 4 pages of the story, ask students to brainstorm 3 adjectives to describe the kind of boy that Pedro is - invite students to share their adjectives out loud with the rest of the group - ask students to write each adjective on a self-stick note and to post it onto the first paper cut out - explain that this is how we will keep track of how Pedro's character changes throughout the story - repeat this activity with the second cut out once you have reached the 16th page of the story, ending with the line " 'Go to bed, son,' said his father." - the last time you do this activity will be at the end of the book with the remaining cut out - each completed cut out should be left posted on the wall for the duration of the reading and activities that will be done with this book - at the end, have students travel around the room and revisit each cut out to explore the adjectives - debrief by discussing differences and why students think that these differences have occurred and what may have caused them 		
<p>• Gossip Mill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - after Don Daniel is taken away, ask students to imagine themselves as one of the people that were present when he was arrested by the soldiers - explain that they will be walking around the room as if it were the town square and that this is immediately after the soldiers had left with Don Daniel 		

- in role, students will circulate, meet each other, pause and discuss (gossip about) what had happened to Don Daniel earlier
- you might suggest ideas such as worries and fears, reasons for the arrest, agreement/disagreement with the incident, whether they themselves are against the dictatorship and why
- debrief as a group and unpack the activity by asking students to write a letter to a relative living in another town about Don Daniel's arrest and how it made them feel
-

• **Tableau and Thought Tracking**

- ask students to imagine that Captain Romo has entered the classroom
- in small groups, students will create a frozen picture of what Pedro and his classmates are doing when Captain Romo arrives
- allow time for planning and rehearsal before sharing with each other
- after all small groups have shared their tableau, ask them to go back to into their tableau and this time, they will think of one phrase or thought to repeat in their heads (in role) while in their tableau position
- give groups rehearsal time again before asking them to share
- as each small group shares their tableau, explain that you will walk around the tableau and if they feel a tap on their shoulder, they should speak their repeated phrase out loud
- once all the groups have shared, debrief by discussing all the different thoughts and feelings that were expressed (What was similar? What was different?)
-

• **Corridor of Voices/ Decision Alley**

- this activity will explore inner conflict that may be felt when faced with a tough decision
- students will hear many different voices expressing opinions and reservations over and over again as they travel through a corridor made by their peers
- Pedro must decide what to write in his letter for Captain Romo ("When my father comes home from work...")
- students will quietly choose one phrase to repeat over and over of what they think Pedro should do/write in the letter
- once students have decided on a phrase, ask them to face each other and to form two lines of equal length across the space
- once two lines have been formed, students may begin repeating their one phrase over and over again
- allow a couple repetitions before sending a student through the corridor
- once the first student has passed through the corridor of people, he/she will rejoin the corridor for the next student to pass through
- repeat process until all students have passed through

- debrief by discussing the experience as a large group (Did it change your mind about what to write/not to write? Have you ever faced a similar situation where you felt conflicted about what decision to make? What do you think Pedro will do and why?)
- students could then write their version of the essay for Captain Romo in the role of Pedro after their experience with the Corridor of Voices

Innocenti (1985) tells the story of *Rose Blanche* in a way that is both straightforward and poetic. The activities for this book are listed in chronological order. The purpose of this is to build tension within the drama and to simulate the rising tension in the story itself. After trying these activities as described below, you may choose to adapt the same strategies/ build upon them for other points of the book.

Book Title	Author	Illustrator
<i>Rose Blanche</i>	Roberto Innocenti	Roberto Innocenti
Synopsis		
<p>Rose Blanche is a young girl living during the Second World War in a small German town. She is unaware of the reasons for and implications of the war at the beginning of the book. Rose Blanche carries a Nazi flag, smiles and waves at soldiers, and thinks nothing of what is happening. One day, on a walk through the town, she sees a small boy trying to escape from the back of a truck. The boy is stopped and cornered by the mayor and brought back to the soldiers. Rose Blanche follows the truck through the forest and eventually discovers a concentration camp. After that day, she returns with her lunch to feed the starving prisoners. One day, she goes on her usual walk through the forest to bring food to the prisoners and never returns.</p>		
Suggested Activities		
<p>• Complete the Picture and Thought Tracking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - this activity will take place after the boy is recaptured ("It happened very fast.") - review what has happened in the story so far - ask students to form a circle and explain that we will be building a picture together to show what has happened in the story - explain that the picture will be built in the centre of the circle with volunteers, beginning with one volunteer - once the first person has placed themselves and frozen their position in the circle, as for the next volunteer to add themselves to the picture that has already been made 		

- allow the other students to view the picture for about a minute and then ask the first two participants to relax but to stay in the middle of the circle
- explain that the rest of the group will be asked to add themselves to the picture and how they position themselves will depend on how they interpreted the picture that was made by the first two participants
- ask the two participants to engage in their picture again and to remain frozen, thinking about facial expressions, body language, and gaze
- invite the rest of the students to add themselves to the picture as they are ready (try to encourage them to enter one at a time after processing what has been done before their entry)
- you may need to invite the participants to relax their bodies from time to time before engaging in the frozen picture again to avoid fatigue
- once everyone has joined the picture, tap a few participants on the shoulder and ask them to share with everyone who they are and why they are there
- tap another few participants on the shoulder and ask them to share where they are headed to from this point
- tap yet another few participants on the shoulder and ask them to share how they are feeling or what they are thinking at this point in time
- ask everyone to relax and debrief the experience by sharing one word that sums up the experience of completing the picture (it could be about their own experience of completing the picture, the experience of being in role, or the experience of the character that they were portraying within the context of the image)

• **Town Hall Meeting**

- Rose Blanche has gone missing by the end of the book and no one really knows what has happened to her
- welcome students as members of the town and thank them for attending the town hall meeting to help and find Rose Blanche
- remind students of the situation at hand (missing child, war raging on)
- begin the discussion by posing questions like: Did anyone see Rose Blanche today? When was the last time you saw her? What was she wearing? Which direction was she headed in?
- continue the discussion by asking for suggestions on how we might find her (action plan)
- try to facilitate the conversation so students can explore, in role as townspeople, the mood of the town at this point, what has been happening, and how they feel about the war, evacuation, and what has taken place so far
- this activity could be used as a writing prompt or scaffold for a write-in-role activity

• **Problem in the Chair**

- this activity takes place at the end of the book
- ask students to form a large circle

- place an empty chair in the centre of the circle and explain that this empty chair represents the problem in the story
- students may want more clarification but you are meant to leave the problem itself open to interpretation
- ask the students to think about what the problem in the story might be, but not to share it out loud
- students will picture the problem sitting in that chair and then physically position themselves around the room in relation to that problem (for example: if they see the problem as Nazism and WWII and they are taking on the role of the little boy, they might stand right next to the chair or sit on the chair, or they might take on the role of a present day student and position themselves far away from the problem of Nazism and WWII)
- as the students are positioning themselves, remind them that the direction that they are facing and their body language also says a lot about how they or their character feels about the problem in the chair
- once everyone has placed themselves in relation to the chair, ask each individual to share what they think the problem in the story is, who they are/their role, and why they are positioned in that spot
- debrief by discussing the experience (What made this difficult/confusing/easy or otherwise?)
- could also discuss the nature of problems and how there may be many interpretations of a situation depending on your perspective

Eco's (1989) story *The Bomb and The General* centres around a general who is bent on making war with atom bombs and the atoms' decision not to participate. The simple text is easy to understand without being patronizing. The activities for this book could be interpreted as lower risk activities for the participants. However, participants will still be invited to express opinions and ideas based on what they think they know about the character(s)/situation and what they will eventually learn through listening to the story.

Book Title	Author	Illustrator
<i>The Bomb and The General</i>	Umberto Eco	Eugenio Carmi
Synopsis		
A power-hungry general sets out to create a war and destroy the world. He knows about the power of atoms and their ability to explode and so he decides to collect many atoms to make bombs. As the general prepares for his war, the atoms (who would rather live peacefully) decide that they do not want to be part of this war and sneak out of the bombs and the general's attic. When the general and his friends decide to launch their		

attack, the bombs are nothing but empty shells and fall from the sky without causing harm to anyone. The relieved people use the empty bombshells as flowerpots and celebrate the beauty of a world without bombs.

Suggested Activities

• Objects of Character

- as a precursor to the story (a pre-reading strategy, if you will) students will be shown a collection of objects that belong to a character in the story (The General)
- assemble the following objects: *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu, an old black-and-white photo of a scowling boy, a candy bar wrapper, a postcard/photo of a volcanic eruption, a piece of gold braid or gold fabric, a set of keys, an empty file folder labeled "Master Plan"
- explain to students that this collection of objects was found in a bag outside the school and that we need to figure out who these things belong to
- students will be asked to interpret these objects to figure out what kind of person owns them
- prompting questions might be: Where is this person from? Are they male or female? What do they do for a living? What do they like? What can we tell about their personality?
- lay these objects out around the room and divide the students into 7 groups and direct them to examine each object in a stations approach while taking notes to record their ideas for each item (use your discretion to time the rotations, perhaps 3 to 5 minutes per object)
- once all the students have had a chance to rotate through the objects, ask each group to share what they feel they have learned about the owner through examining the items
- record all ideas on a piece of chart paper to be posted on the wall for the duration of the story's exploration so that it can be revisited and added to
- you may ask the students to support their ideas with reasons based on their interpretations of the items
- as you begin to read the story, you may choose to pause at certain points and ask students if they still agree with certain observations that were initially made and amend the group's list as needed

• Flashback

- at "And he declared war," pause the reading and divide the students into groups of 4 or 5
- review what has happened so far in the story and what we already know about the main characters
- explain that each small group will be creating a frozen image that shows a flashback of what led the General up to the point where he wanted to create

a war

- ask the groups to think about what may have happened in the General's past that made him think and feel this way
- explain that there is no right or wrong answer and that there could be many reasons that made the General into the person he is at this point in the story
- give the groups planning time and rehearsal time and remind them of the qualities of a strong frozen image (body language, levels, facial expressions, gaze, energy despite stillness)
- once it seems that the groups have practiced their frozen images, allow time for a group rehearsal where you would count down from 5 to 0 and all the groups would go from neutral into their frozen image through the count of 5 and then hold
- once the group rehearsal has been done, ask the students to make any adjustments they feel are needed and run the group rehearsal again in the same manner
- when you feel the groups are ready, invite each small group to present their frozen image to the rest of the class
- debrief by discussing similarities between each frozen image and things that differed and why that might be the case
- you could also discuss if "knowing" or "learning" about the General's past makes him more or less sympathetic in this situation

• **Making Maps/Diagrams**

- once you have reached "But where could they find refuge?" pause your reading
- in role as the mayor of the city and welcome them to the evacuation meeting
- students will be in role as evacuation planners and experts
- the war is approaching and the city must come up with an evacuation plan for the residents but there are many options of where they could go
- their task is to design a map that will lead them to a safe place, complete with routes, important landmarks, necessary stops (for food, gas, and lodgings)
- form students into groups of 4 to 5 and speak to each group about roles and look for volunteers within each group to take on a different role (route planner, writer for instructions, lodging and landmarks planner, artist(s), presenter, etc., there can be overlap within these roles)
- roles are necessary to encourage involvement and to build belief
- the map must also show where the route will begin and where it will end
- a list of written instructions that includes what the evacuees need to bring with them should also be included
- once the maps and instructions are complete, each group will present their map and instructions and justify why theirs makes the most sense for the city
- after all the groups have presented, you could hold a secret ballot vote to determine which evacuation plan the city will use
- alternatively, you could ask the students to rank the plans as Plan A, B, C, etc. as a secret ballot

Curricular Connections

The following prescribed learning outcomes have been taken from the British Columbia Ministry of Education Integrated Resource Plans (IRPs), Prescribed Learning Outcomes (PLOs) in the appropriate subject areas (English Language Arts, Fine Arts, and Social Studies).

Prescribed Learning outcomes have been presented in bullet form and are outlined for Grade 6 and 7 students only for the purposes of this paper.

Picturebook	Grade	Subject	Prescribed Learning Outcome
All books	6/7	Language Arts (Oral Language-Speaking and Listening)	use speaking to explore, express, and present a range of ideas, information, and feelings for different purposes and audiences, by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using prior knowledge and/or other sources of evidence - staying on topic in discussions presenting in a clear, organized, and - effective manner explaining and effectively supporting a viewpoint
All books	6/7	Language Arts (Oral Language-Speaking and Listening)	use speaking and listening to improve and extend thinking, by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - questioning and speculating acquiring new ideas - analyzing and evaluating ideas developing explanations considering alternative viewpoints - summarizing and synthesizing - problem solving
All books	6/7	Language Arts (Thinking-Reading and Viewing)	respond to selections they read or view, by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - expressing opinions and making judgments supported by explanations and evidence - explaining connections (text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world)

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identifying personally meaningful selections, passages, and images
All books	6/7	Language Arts (Writing and Representing)	<p>use writing and representing to extend thinking, by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - developing explanations - analyzing the relationships in ideas and information - exploring new ideas (e.g., examining alternative viewpoints, transposing writing from one form to another)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Cello of Mr. O</i> • <i>The Bomb and The General</i> 	6/7	Fine Arts (Presentation and Performance)	revise their performances through self- and peer evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Bomb and The General</i> • <i>The Composition</i> 	6/7	Fine Arts (Drama Skills)	alter language and movement of a role to fit changing dramatic situations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Bomb and The General</i> • <i>The Cello of Mr. O</i> 	6/7	Fine Arts (Image Development and Design Strategies)	<p>make 2-D and 3-D images:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using a variety of sources - using a variety of image-development strategies, including juxtaposition and metamorphosis - using design strategies from a variety of styles - for specific purposes - that solve complex design problems, considering form and function - that engage more than one of the senses
	7	Social Studies	defend a position on a contemporary or

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Composition</i> • <i>The Bomb and The General</i> • <i>Rose Blanche</i> 		(Skills and Processes)	historical issue
All books	6	Social Studies (Skills and Processes)	apply critical thinking skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - including comparing, classifying, inferring, imagining, verifying, identifying relationships, summarizing, and drawing conclusions – to a range of problems and issues

Evaluation

In order to assess/evaluate the Prescribed Learning Outcomes that have been listed in the section above, several things may be considered:

- student participation (in drama activities, in use of materials and techniques, and in the debriefing discussions)
- cooperation and group interactions (mutual respect, willing suspension of disbelief, attitudes)
- written/art work and reflections

How “well” a student participates could be measured in different ways. You could take note of the extent to which the student(s) interact with and use the drama conventions or strategies. This will also help to demonstrate how much of the story that they understand. However, for some students, improved comprehension or understanding may take place after the drama activities and discussion so the timing and method you use to ascertain their depth of understanding may have an effect on the outcome of the assessment.

Within process drama, cooperation and respect are crucial to the success of the experience. Through observation, a teacher can see if a student is “buying in” or working collaboratively with his/her peers. Other ways to determine this element is through self and peer evaluations (Likert scales, surveys, etc.) and post-activity reflections.

The most tangible piece that could be used for evaluation purposes is any written or art work that stems from the drama activities. You could easily generate criteria with the students (or on your own, although generating criteria with the students for this work is highly recommended to increase and reinforce ownership, engagement, and authenticity) for any of the other modes of expression that arise from these activities.

Closing Remarks

This annotated bibliography is meant as a starting point for those who are interested in pursuing the use of drama in the classroom as an integrated strategy to support other curricular areas. Drama has great potential beyond a Friday afternoon filler activity or as icebreakers in September. Many teachers may already be incorporating elements of drama into their teaching without it having been named as such. The picturebooks and activities discussed in this section aimed to provide a concrete starting point for the exploration of the themes of war and oppression and the exploration of various language arts, fine arts, and social studies learning outcomes through the use of drama and other multimodal processes.

SECTION 4: CONCLUSIONS

I began this paper with three questions:

- What does the literature suggest about the ways in which drama can support reading, specifically in the area of comprehension?
- What novels intended for young readers lend themselves to interpretation/comprehension through drama; and,
- How can a teacher facilitate student interpretation/comprehension through drama?

After immersing myself in the recent drama education literature, I found support for the many possibilities that process drama has to support various levels of learners in the area of reading. As a strategy, drama can be used in a cross-curricular manner to create and promote a deeper understanding of content, as well as a more authentic and meaningful engagement with the stories. While I chose to use picturebooks for the purposes of this paper, it was also apparent that a multitude of drama activities could be adapted and implemented to support the reading of a variety texts, including fiction and nonfiction novels, poetry, dramatic plays, and short stories.

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APPENDIX A

Book Title	Author	Illustrator	Description
The Cello of Mr. O	Jane Cutler	Greg Couch	In a war-torn city, a little girl finds courage and hope through a neighbour's music.
Materials			
<p>Visualization: picturebook, paper and other art materials (pastels, markers, paints, brushes)</p> <p>Living Sculptures: picturebook, rehearsal space (could be classroom or some other large space)</p> <p>Talk Show: microphone (for host), name tags, predetermined roles for guests, paper and pencils, chairs at front of room for guests, a sign/banner with name of talk show posted on wall behind guests (optional, to help build belief)</p>			
Activity			
<p>Visualization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - read first 3 pages and ask to imagine scene with eyes closed - think of the sounds, sights, smells, and tastes - tap on the shoulder and ask to share a single word - give a few minutes to think of a word to describe how might feel to have to live in same place - revisit some of the sense words shared before asking v to share emotion words - use as a prompt for art piece to represent the mood of the beginning of the story/setting 			
<p>Living Sculptures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - done at the close of the book - in groups of 3, decide on partner A, B, and C - partner A sculpts beginning of the story, partner B middle of the story, and partner C end of the story - must use body language and miming to show how to position the bodies - think about different levels, facial expressions, and their gazes - once the partners positioned, the sculptor places him/herself into sculpture - when the first section has been sculpted, switch to a different sculptor and proceed - share living sculptures in sequence - representation of moments group thought were important in the beginning, middle, and end of story - debrief some of the choices that were made and why particular moments were important 			
<p>Talk Show</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - at the end of the story, 5 volunteers take on certain roles, ask them to wait for you outside of the room - you have invited several characters from the book to participate in a "Question and Answer" period - audience members write 3 questions to ask each guest - you would be mediator/talk show host - scaffold by reviewing events of story and coming up with sample questions - assign roles to the volunteer guests outside the room - give name tags for roles, reenter the room in role as talk show host - introduce each guest and then open the floor to questions from audience - monitor questions and responses for complexity and authenticity - debrief, do a quick write about something that they learned about the story/characters 			

Book Title	Author	Illustrator	Description
The Composition	Antonio Skármeta	Alfonso Ruano	A young boy learns about the realities of living in a dictatorship through a series of events.
Materials			
<p>Role on the Wall: picturebook, 3 life-sized cut-outs of a boy figure (one labeled “Beginning”, one “Middle” and one “End”), self-stick notes, pencils</p> <p>Gossip Mill: picturebook, classroom/ rehearsal space</p> <p>Tableau and Thought Tracking: picturebook, classroom/ rehearsal space</p> <p>Corridor of Voices/ Decision Alley: picturebook, classroom/ rehearsal space, paper and pencils</p>			
Activity			
<p>Role on the Wall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - read first 4 pages, brainstorm 3 adjectives to describe Pedro - share and write each adjective on a self-stick note and post onto paper cut out - repeat this activity with the second cut out at 16th page of the story, ending with “Go to bed, son.” - the last time you do this will be at the end of the book with the remaining cut out - cut outs should be posted on wall for the duration of work done with book - at end, travel around room and revisit each cut out to explore adjectives - debrief differences and why these differences have occurred and what may have caused them 			
<p>Gossip Mill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - after Don Daniel is taken away, ask to imagine as one of the people that were present - will be walking around the room as if it were the town square - in role, circulate, meet each other, pause and discuss (gossip about) what happened to Don Daniel - suggest ideas such as worries and fears, reasons for arrest, agreement/disagreement with incident - debrief by writing letter to relative living in another town about Don Daniel’s arrest 			
<p>Tableau and Thought Tracking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - imagine that Captain Romo has entered the classroom - create a frozen picture of what Pedro and classmates are doing - allow time for planning and rehearsal before sharing with each other - after all have shared, ask to think of one phrase or thought to repeat in heads while in tableau - give rehearsal time again and share - if they feel tap on shoulder, speak their repeated phrase out loud - once all groups share, debrief by discussing all thoughts and feelings that were expressed 			
<p>Corridor of Voices/ Decision Alley</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - choose one phrase to repeat over and over of what Pedro should do/write in letter - once decided on a phrase, ask to face each other and form two lines of equal length across space - when two lines formed, may begin repeating their one phrase - once first student has passed through corridor, rejoin corridor for next student to pass through - debrief as large group, write their version of essay in role of Pedro 			

Book Title	Author	Illustrator	Description
Rose Blanche	Roberto Innocenti	Roberto Innocenti	A young German girl living through WWII discovers a concentration camp in her town.
Materials			
<p>Complete the Picture and Thought Tracking: picturebook, classroom/ rehearsal space</p> <p>Town Hall Meeting: picturebook, classroom/ rehearsal space, “photo” of Rose Blanche (optional) to post at the meeting, chairs for members to sit in</p> <p>Problem In the Chair: picturebook, classroom/ rehearsal space, empty chair for the problem</p>			
Activity			
<p>Complete the Picture and Thought Tracking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - after the boy is recaptured (“It happened very fast.”) - picture built in the centre of circle beginning with one volunteer - ask next volunteer to add themselves - ask two participants to engage in picture and remain frozen - rest of students to add themselves to picture one at a time - once everyone is in, tap participants on shoulder and ask to share who they are and why they are there - tap another few on shoulder and ask to share where they are headed to from this point - tap another few on shoulder and ask to share feeling or what they are thinking at this point - debrief by sharing one word that sums up experience of completing the picture 			
<p>Town Hall Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - welcome as members of the town, thank them for attending the town hall meeting to help find Rose Blanche - remind students of situation at hand (missing child, war raging on) - begin discussion by posing questions like: Did anyone see Rose Blanche today? When was the last time you saw her? What was she wearing? Which direction was she headed in? - ask for suggestions on how we might find her (action plan) - facilitate conversation to explore the mood of the town at this point, what has been happening, and how they feel about the war, evacuation, and what has taken place - used as a writing prompt or scaffold for a write-in-role activity 			
<p>Problem in the Chair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ask students to form a large circle - place empty chair in the centre of the circle - ask to think about what problem in story might be, but not to share out loud - students will physically position themselves around room in relation to problem - while positioning, remind them direction and body language say a lot about how character feels about problem in chair - once placed in relation to chair, ask to share what problem in story is, who they are/their role, and why positioned in that spot - debrief (What made this difficult/confusing/easy or otherwise?) - discuss nature of problems and may be many interpretations of situation depending on perspective 			

Book Title	Author	Illustrator	Description
The Bomb and The General	Umberto Eco	Eugenio Carmi	A general stock piles atom bombs to begin a destructive war.
Materials			
<p>Objects of Character: the following objects: <i>The Art of War</i> by Sun Tzu, an old black-and-white photo of a scowling boy, a candy bar wrapper, a postcard/photo of a volcanic eruption, a piece of gold braid or gold fabric, a set of keys, an empty file folder labeled “Master Plan”</p> <p>Flashback: picturebook, classroom/ rehearsal space</p> <p>Making Maps/Diagrams: picturebook, large sheets of blank paper, lined paper, pencils, markers/ pencil crayons, classroom/ rehearsal space</p>			
Activity			
<p>Objects of Character</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - show collection of objects that belong to character in story (The General) - prompting questions: Where is this person from? Are they male or female? What do they do for a living? What do they like? What can we tell about their personality? - lay objects around the room and divide 7 groups and direct to examine in stations approach - once had a chance to rotate through objects, ask to share what they have learned about owner - record all ideas on piece of chart paper to be posted on wall - ask to support their ideas with reasons based on interpretations of items - use and revise throughout reading of picturebook 			
<p>Flashback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - at “And he declared war,” divide into groups of 4 or 5 - review what has happened so far - will be creating flashback of what led General up to this point - what may have happened in General’s past that made him think and feel this way - there is no right or wrong answer - give planning time and rehearsal time and remind of qualities of strong frozen image - once group rehearsal has been done, ask to make any adjustments needed and run group rehearsal again - when ready, invite to present their frozen image to rest of class - debrief similarities between each frozen image, things that differed and why - discuss if “knowing” or “learning” about General’s past makes him more or less sympathetic in situation 			
<p>Making Maps/Diagrams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pause after “But where could they find refuge?” - in role as mayor of the city and welcome them to evacuation meeting - students will be evacuation planners and experts - task is to design map that will lead to a safe place - form groups of 4 to 5, speak to each group about roles, look for volunteers to take on a different role - the map must show where the route will begin and end - list of written instructions that includes what evacuees need to bring - once complete, will present map and instructions and justify why theirs makes most sense for city - after all have presented, could hold secret ballot vote to determine which evacuation plan city will use - alternatively, could ask to rank the plans as Plan A, B, C, etc. as a secret ballot 			

