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Library

Research Paper: Samanda Sankowsky: Making the Stumble Part of the Dance: Using Improvisational Gameplay to Empower Year 8 Girls to Courageously Collaborate in a Social Entrepreneurial Program

A

Samanda recently presented this international action research project to the world in Baltimore, Maryland, in collaboration with the International Coalition of Girls' Schools. Her action research actively explored how 13-to-14-year-old girls engaged in improvisational gameplay activities to empower them to courageously collaborate in a social entrepreneurial program.
The project examined how in their social entrepreneurial teams of four to five, girls participated in one 5-10-minute improvisational gameplay warm up activity each lesson that didactically explored and developed a "toolkit' of fundamental collaborative skills and processes. Samanda's accompanying published research report details powerful examples of the transferability and integrity of drama skills and processes for contemporary teenage girls during key critical developmental phases.

This research presentation will unpack, explore and gift you with:

- Why this research is increasingly relevant for both Drama and non-Drama educators.
- Developmental impacts to consider socially and physically for young girls as they enter Year 7, 8 and/or 9.
- The research approach and activities that Samanda formulated across the project.
- The data collection and analysis process.
- Student voices and insights.
- The four fundamental findings.
- Welcome you to share any questions or insights.

Samanda Sankowsky *is the Coordinator of Dance and Drama (Pre-Kindergarten to Year 12) at Perth College Anglican School for Girls and is the President of DramaWest. She is a Queenslander at heart, where she studied a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Drama and Film), and Graduate Diploma in Secondary Education at Queensland University of Technology. Samanda was artistically nurtured and inspired by companies including Zen Zen Zo, Dead Puppets Society, debase, C!RCA and toured as a Children's Theatre performer. This ignited her passion for diving into the hybrid world of Physical Theatre and learning the transformative power of tapping into everyone's inner-three-year-old along the way. In 2024, she completed an international action research project that focused on the benefits of using improvisation gameplay to empower Year 8 girls to collaborate and thrive in social entrepreneurial programs. Samanda has recently returned from Baltimore, where she presented and published this research in collaboration with the International Coalition of Girls' Schools.*

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Workshop: Toby Maddern & Kristin McDonnell: Building a Thriving Drama Program Through Learner Agency and the Production Company Model

A

This presentation will discuss the way we approach curriculum design at Brighton Secondary School, with a focus on student engagement at the year 9 level. Through development of both performance, and technical theatre and design classes, students work as production companies to devise an original production that puts learner agency at the centre of the learning experience. Now in it's fourth year, these courses attract 150+ students, over half of the year 9 cohort, and has resulted in increased numbers and learning outcomes across the senior years. Hear how we do it, from the perspective of both an experienced and early career teacher.

Toby Maddern *is an Early Career Teacher who graduated from Flinders University in 2023, and has begun his teaching career at Brighton Secondary School. His experience in the middle years has focused on developing the progression of Drama programs from 7-9, and the key foundational skills required to succeed.*

Kristin McDonnell *has worked as a Drama teacher at Brighton Secondary School since 2012. She has initiated innovative programs that have resulted in high levels of student engagement. Kristin is focused on creating collaborative learning environments that promote connectedness and student agency.*

Library

Workshop: Jeffrey Tan: NEW LIFE, a process drama workshop empowering seniors to lead seniors

A

Inspired by Drama Australia's National Conference of BE INVIGORATED, this practical process drama workshop invites participants to re-discover their life purpose (s) through an interactive and immersive relatable story.
Taking inspiration from Singaporean Sophia Huang's children's picture book, Mr. Roll finds New life, this process drama workshop invites participants to dive into the emotional journey of Mr. Roll when he retires. What are the roles of seniors when they retire? Can seniors still have value in life? Can seniors lead other seniors in social life? Participants will also discover their leadership style through the process drama workshop. At the end of the workshop, participants will also create games from found materials. This practical process drama workshop will bring fun, creativity and well-being inspired by the Singapore children's picture book. This workshop has been presented in Singapore (Lions Befrienders, Clementi Seniors Volunteers Retreat 2023), Beijing (IDEA2024), and New Zealand (ITAC2024).

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*Since 2022, **Jeffrey Tan** has been an Adjunct Senior Lecturer at the National University of Singapore where he co-developed and co-teaches a course entitled Theatre & Community Engagement.*
Jeffrey Tan is also a theatre director, drama educator and creative producer. He holds a BA (Drama) from the Queensland University of Technology, QUT (Australia) and a MA (Drama and Theatre Education) from the University of Warwick (United Kingdom).
Some of the projects Jeffrey conceptualized and produced include OPEN HOMES (SIFA 2015, SIFA2017, Brisbane 2019, OzAsia Adelaide2021), ArtsXplore 2.0, a five-month mentorship (2022), Inspirations, a year-long series of arts and wellness programmes, by UOB and National Arts Council (NAC) (2023) and IGNITE, a six-month mentorship for Arts Self Employed Persons for NAC (2024). Jeffrey has also been an Artist in residence at Lions Befrienders, Clementi, Blk 344 since 2023 (Our Clementi Home), 2024 (Stories of Gratitude) and 2024 (World of Puppets).

Macaulay Auditorium

Workshop: Mel Pedavoli & Che Walsh-Kemp: Cine-Theatre: Leveraging Digital for the Drama Classroom (Middle/Senior) B

As a hybrid art form, Cine-theatre combines live actors, video projectors and cinematic techniques to create unique storytelling experiences. Our workshop will invigorate the way drama educators can harness cine-theatre and emerging technologies (including AI) in the classroom to engage students and promote theatrical risk-taking. Combining Project Zero thinking routines for the classroom with experiential workshops, this Masterclass is designed to challenge participants to dig deeper into the skillsets and interests of their students, leveraging any digital technologies available to transform student-devised work, assessment and productions. Regardless of what stage participants are at with their digital capabilities, there are access points for all teachers and theatre makers as we take them through our over ten-year journey of integrating the digital into our classrooms and productions. We will begin with a presentation of student work samples, followed by scaffolded learning activities, and then lead practical workshops where participants experiment with cameras, smartphones, iPads, and digital projectors to create their own cine-theatre performance. Participants will leave with example programmes and resources, as well as the practical apparatus to feel confident using any available equipment to inspire imaginations and re-invigorate classroom pedagogy. This workshop has links to NSW Stage 6 Multidiscipline Theatre as well as Drama and Media Arts in ACARA's National Curriculum.

***Mel Pedavoli** is the Assistant Principal of Pedagogy and Academic Leadership at Loreto College, Marryatville. With a strong commitment to enhancing educational practices, she leads innovative learning initiatives and develops schoolwide teaching strategies to support staff. Previously, Mel served as the Head of Drama and Theatre Production at Pymble Ladies' College and has held significant roles including Head of Teacher Development and Head of English at St Catherine's Sydney. Her diverse experience also includes positions in Drama and English departments at International Grammar School and St Aloysius' College, Milson's Point. With over fifteen years of teaching experience, Mel has a proven track record of driving educational change through a practice-based approach to pedagogy. Her leadership fosters a culture of*

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lifelong learning,resulting in significant growth and success within her teams. Mel holds a Master of Educational Learning and Leadership from UTS and a Bachelor of Education with First Class Honours from Sydney University. Her strengths include empowering and developing others, championing best practices, and fostering positive change in response to the evolving educational landscape.

***Ché Walsh-Kemp** has 20 years' experience as a teacher of Drama across a range of educational contexts. She completed a BA Dance & Theatre/B Education at UNSW and later a Certificate III in Live Production and Events (Technical Operations) through NIDA. She currently teaches Drama and Film at St Aloysius' College (NSW) where she has also directed and stage managed several productions including The Wasps, The Addams Family, Twelve Angry Men, Past the Shallows and A Few Good Men. Ché has been a HSC marker and presented at the Drama NSW conference in 2019 with her Head of Department on Theatrical Risk-Taking in the Group Performance. Her teaching expertise includes Dance and VET Entertainment Industry. Ché has completed professional development courses in physical theatre, film production and devising with Frantic Assembly and Complicité.*

Old Auditorium

Workshop: George Kemp & Kate Murphy: The Teenage Voice: Practical tools and techniques for when teachers have run out of ways to say "speak louder" (Middle/Senior) **C**

Voice unites us – across language, culture, gender. But for young people, it can feel like all it does is make them feel anxious, exposed. There are a myriad of reasons why teens have a fear of their voices. After all, it's breaking, duplicitous, awkward, and it requires you to breathe (literally inspiration) which in turn, forces you to feel. What a terrifying prospect — who feels more acutely than a pubescent teen?
How do we turn that anxious emotion into power?
This 90 minute Workshop, run by ATYPs very own Education Manager & Resident Artist George Kemp and Workshop Manager and vocal expert Kate Murphy, offers teachers practical tools and techniques for when teachers have run out of ways to say "talk louder!' Voice work is a collaborative exercise. It's what makes a student able to work sustainably – it is, in essence, a wellbeing practice. It encourages young people to discover their voice in all its power, both in the drama classroom and beyond – to INVIGORATE them to find their full potential.

***George Kemp (Australian Theatre for Young People)** has been working as a theatre maker and educator for nearly twenty years. He trained at Charles Sturt University and holds a Masters degree in Classical Acting from London's Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. His career as an actor saw him working both in England and Australia for multiple mainstage companies, including The Young Vic, The Hampstead Theatre, Sydney Theatre Company, Bell Shakespeare as well as national and international tours of Pop Up Globe and The Play That Goes Wrong. George is also a writer, having written award winning plays. His debut novel, Soft Serve is soon to be published by UQP. He works as a passionate arts educator for multiple training organisations (Bell Shakespeare, NIDA, Brent Street, ATYP amongst others) and is currently the Education Manager and Resident Artist at Australian Theatre for Young People. He also presents at conferences nationally and internationally.*

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***Kate Murphy** is a professional director, actor, producer, voice artist and voice director. She has a degree in Theatre Arts from the University of Southern Queensland and has studied at The Second City Improv Theatre in Chicago. Kate is one of Australia's leading Voice Directors and Voice Over Artists, specialising in animation. With a passion for working with young actors to bring characters to life, Kate has voice-directed some of Australia's most loved kids' shows including Kangaroo Beach, Ginger and the Vegesaurs, Space Chickens in Space and Reef School. With extensive experience mentoring and collaborating with young people, she has taught acting at the University of Southern Queensland and worked as a teaching artist at the Sydney Opera House, Shake and Stir and ATYP. Kate is currently the Workshop Manager at Australian Theatre for Young People and is voice directing a new Australian animation series.*

R118-Reddin

Workshop: Katherine Kitching: Creating Strings and Sequences - Ideas for Facilitating Student-Devised Theatre (Secondary, Middle, Primary) D

In this workshop, participants will explore a range of processes, methods and short practical activities designed to support teachers in facilitating devising in their classrooms. Suitable for everyone from early years teachers to those who feel like they need to 'invigorate' their devising programs, this workshop will have a focus on middle and senior Drama classrooms, however, concepts could easily be adapted to the primary years. Devising (or playbuilding) is an essential skill for drama students which allows students to explore and create theatre that is meaningful to them. As a 'facilitator' of devised work, teachers are encouraged to engage with a variety of structures, activities and concepts aimed at giving students the best chance of creating successful devised theatre. There will be a practical component of this workshop where participants will have the opportunity to play with some of the concepts in small groups. Please ensure you dress for movement!

*With over 15 years of teaching experience, **Katherine Kitching** is passionate about drama as a vehicle for student voice. Having taught both in Australia and overseas, her experience with different cultures and perspectives informs her classroom practice. Currently teaching at St Peter's Girls' School in Stonyfell, South Australia, Katherine is dedicated to supporting and encouraging her students to create original work which explores issues and ideas that directly impact them.*

E3 Drama Room

Workshop: Christie Tickell-Devey: Drama is Life - Delivering Respectful Relationship Education curriculum with Drama (Middle) E

Derived from my PhD project, this workshop will take participants through the process of using Drama teaching methods to deliver the Queensland Respectful Relationship Education (RRE) curriculum and how this method can be applied to the effectively delivery of wellbeing and life skills programs in schools. The research that informs this project and workshop focuses on the wellbeing and empowerment of young people and has looked for opportunities to engage young people meaningfully in topics of resilience, personal safety, communication, emotional regulation, inclusion and healthy relationships using drama activities such as drama games, freeze frames, roleplay, hot seating and forum theatre.

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In 2023, in response to needs in our community, we, at Wilsonton State High School, began delivering RRE as a separate subject for all year 7 and 8 students. As the Arts HoD, I volunteered to develop this subject using Drama as its delivery method. The implementation of the program has been highly successful and we are looking at extending this program beyond year 7 and 8 and beyond the RRE curriculum into our life skills and wellbeing programs.

Christie Tickell-Devey *is a Drama high school teacher with 20 years of experience, six of which she has been the HoD of Arts at Wilsonton State High School in Toowoomba Qld. She has worked with the local Empire Theatre and UniSQ on various creative projects. She completed her MA in Theatre Education at Goldsmiths College at the University of London in 2006. This year she has undertaken my PhD studies looking at the power of Drama as tool to engage and equip students with skills and confidence through the delivery of Queensland Respectful Relationship Education curriculum.*

Drama Theatre

Workshop: Fiona Martin: Sits-ing In It. Sits spots as provocation for extended wellbeing process drama (Middle/Senior) **F**

This workshop will investigate the value of sit spots as a means of providing provocation material for expanded dramatic action which, encouraging the technique of noticing and paying attention for a student and uniting students in their collective understanding of their local environment with a 'view to the future' (Pigozzi 2003). The sit spot experience will connect the participant with their natural, local surrounds to ignite an affinity with nature in the individual, as well as provide common ground for an ensemble of students with which to collaborate and launch narrative group work. There are a wealth of cross-curricular possibilities with this unit of work as well as capabilities beyond the school community.

Fiona Martin*, Bachelor of Education (Theatre and Literature), GDip Movement and Dance (Therapy and Teaching), GCert Visual Art, Masters Contemporary Art (Performance Art, VCA), Dip/Strat/Psych, has over 25 years' experience as a Drama and Dance educator. She currently teaches Drama across 12 year levels to students from 3 to 15 years old. She advocates and actions student voice and fosters agentic learning in her curriculum crafting. Fiona is a theatre maker, director and writer and has acquitted commissioned theatre works for national conferences, directed, and created works for Melbourne Fringe Festival, and most recently presented a 3-hour Drama workshop at IDEA in Beijing. She was invited to join the 2025 cohort for the TEP (Teacher Excellence Program) with the Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership. Additionally, Fiona is a visual and performance artist, graduating (first class honours) with a Masters of Contemporary Art from the VCA in 2023. She has been artist in residence at Bundanon Trust, Boyd Homestead in NSW and at Bogong (BCSC). She is a dance therapist practicing in Narm Melbourne, a fitness instructor, and a clinical strategic psychotherapist. Her many vocational skills intersect, complimenting and informing her work in the education space, adding nuance and knowledge to her understandings and acknowledgement of the importance of wellbeing for young people.*