

Whoosh!: Bringing Stories Alive through Drama

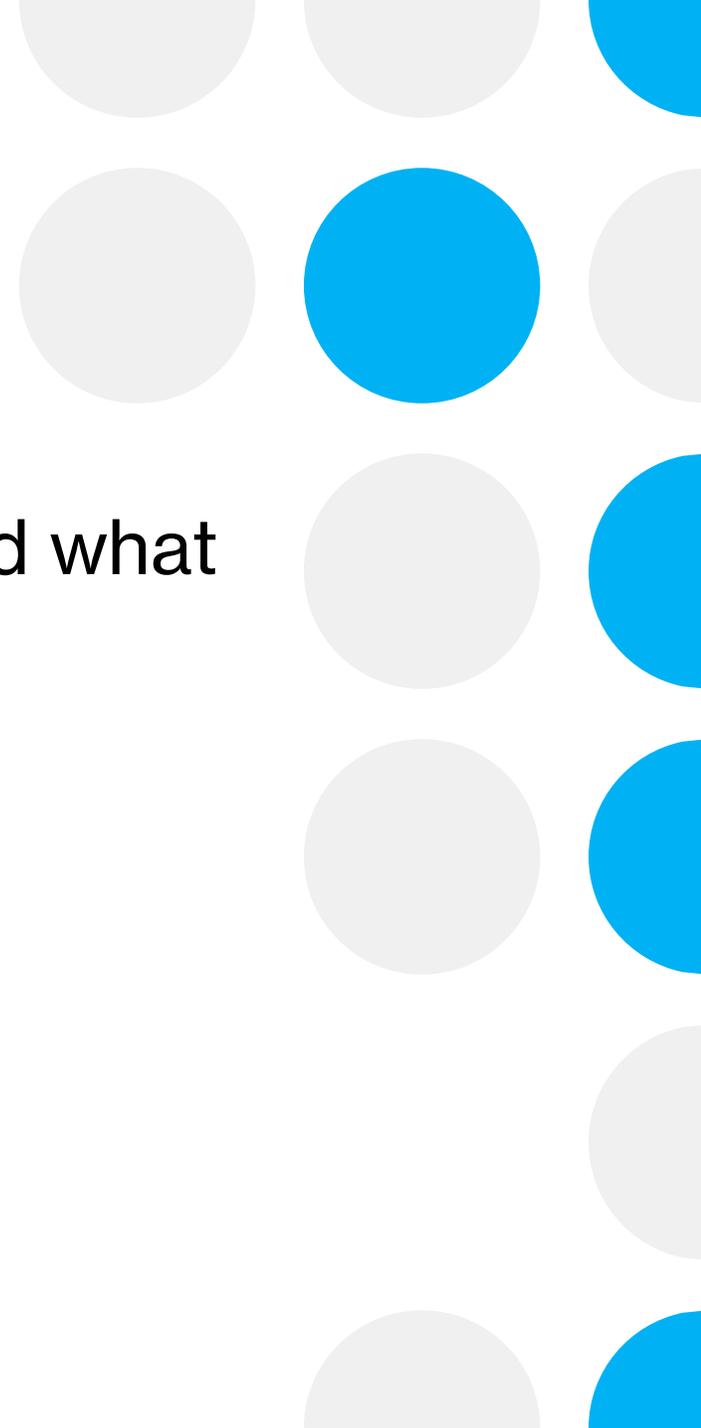
Theodore Tam
English Panel Chairperson
St Stephen's College
18th October, 2025

Disclaimer

To enhance the teaching content, teachers can exercise their professional judgment and consult relevant scholarly work when adopting the learning and teaching resources prepared by educators and other teachers. In support of the implementation of the English Language Education KLA Curriculum, teachers can also select appropriate parts of the resources for classroom learning or extended learning based on pedagogical consideration and the learning needs of students.

Contents

- School context
 - RNCT School-based Support Services – why and what
 - *Story Whoosh!*
 - Learning outcomes and reflections
-



St Stephen's College

A DSS secondary school in Stanley with boarding facilities



English Department

- A **diverse** team of 16 teachers
 - 2 are employed on NET terms
 - 11 possess a first degree from overseas and/or studied in international/overseas schools
 - **Budding** teachers are well supported by **seasoned** peers
 - 7 have taught for less than 5 years
 - 6 have taught for more than 15 years
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Our English teachers enjoy...

promoting a
love of
English

engaging in
professional
dialogue

incorporating
new ideas
into lessons

learning with
students!

School Major Concerns 2023-2028

To empower students to become **reflective learners** who strive for academic excellence in a positive learning environment

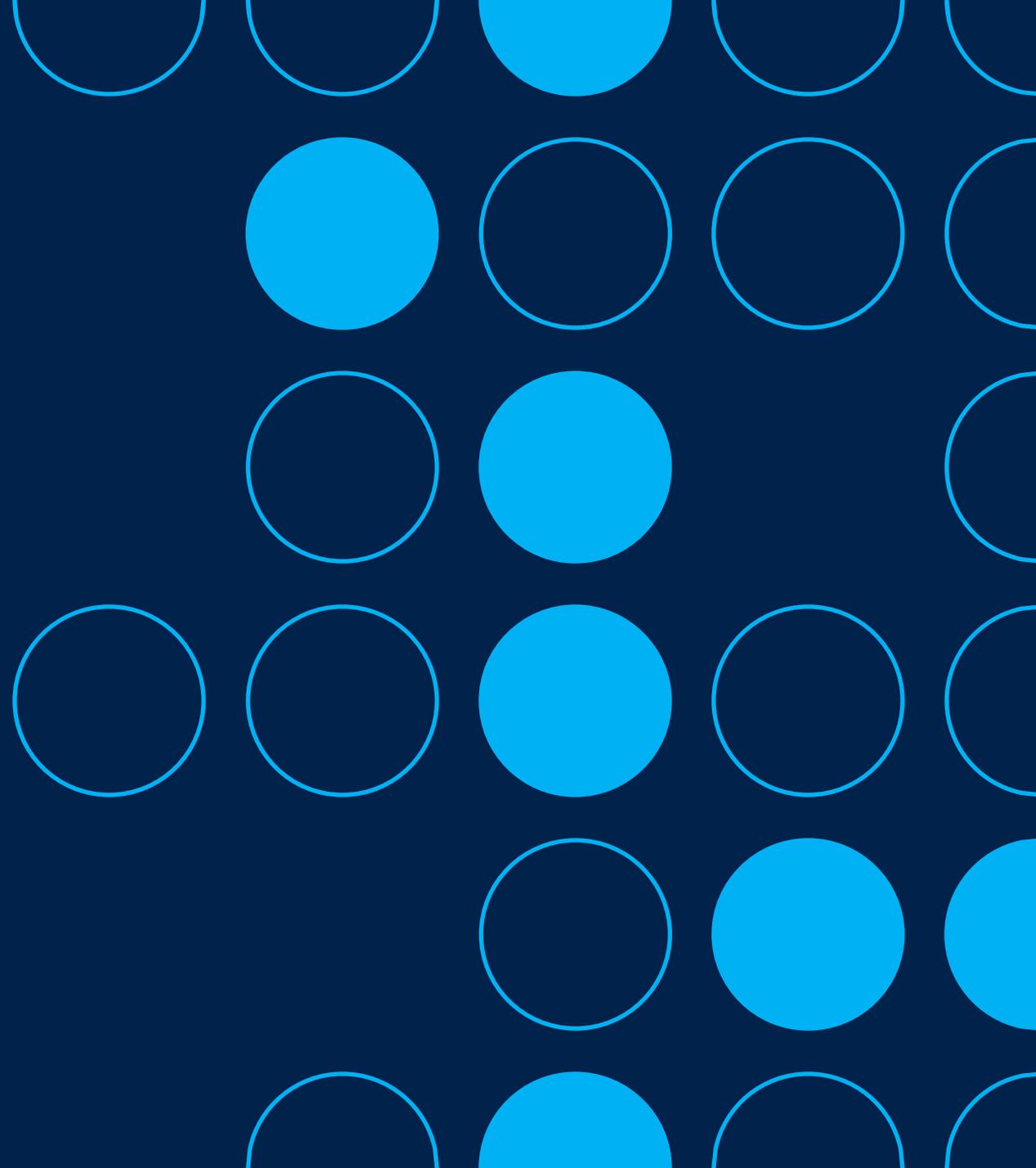


To enrich **learning through experience** and strengthen **values education** in the curriculum

To enhance students' **spiritual, moral and social development**

**Why Drama in
Education?**

**Why School-
based Support?**



Carol Yang Blackbox Theatre



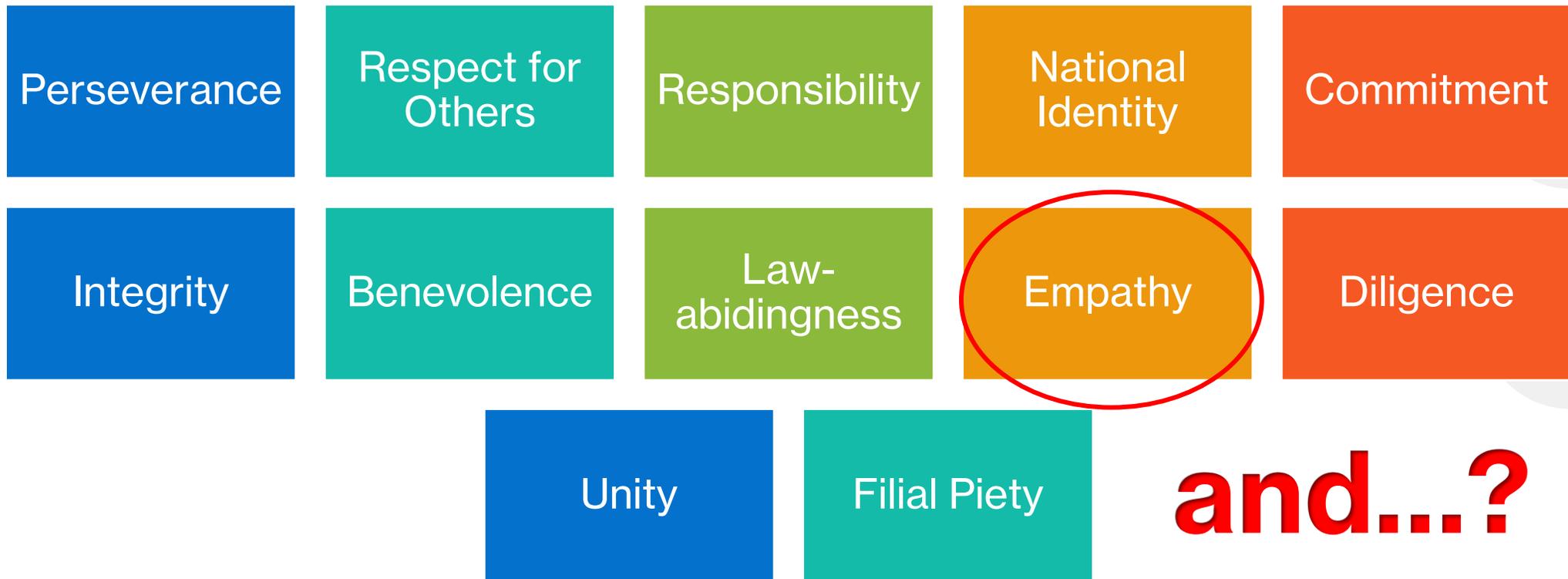
SSC Drama in Education

- Launched in 2024/25 at S1 and being expanded to S2 and S3
- An **integral part** of the junior-form English curriculum
 - January – March: The play as a reader / literary text
 - April – June: From page to stage
 - No formal examination



sweetclipart.com

Values Education: 12 Priority Values and Attitudes

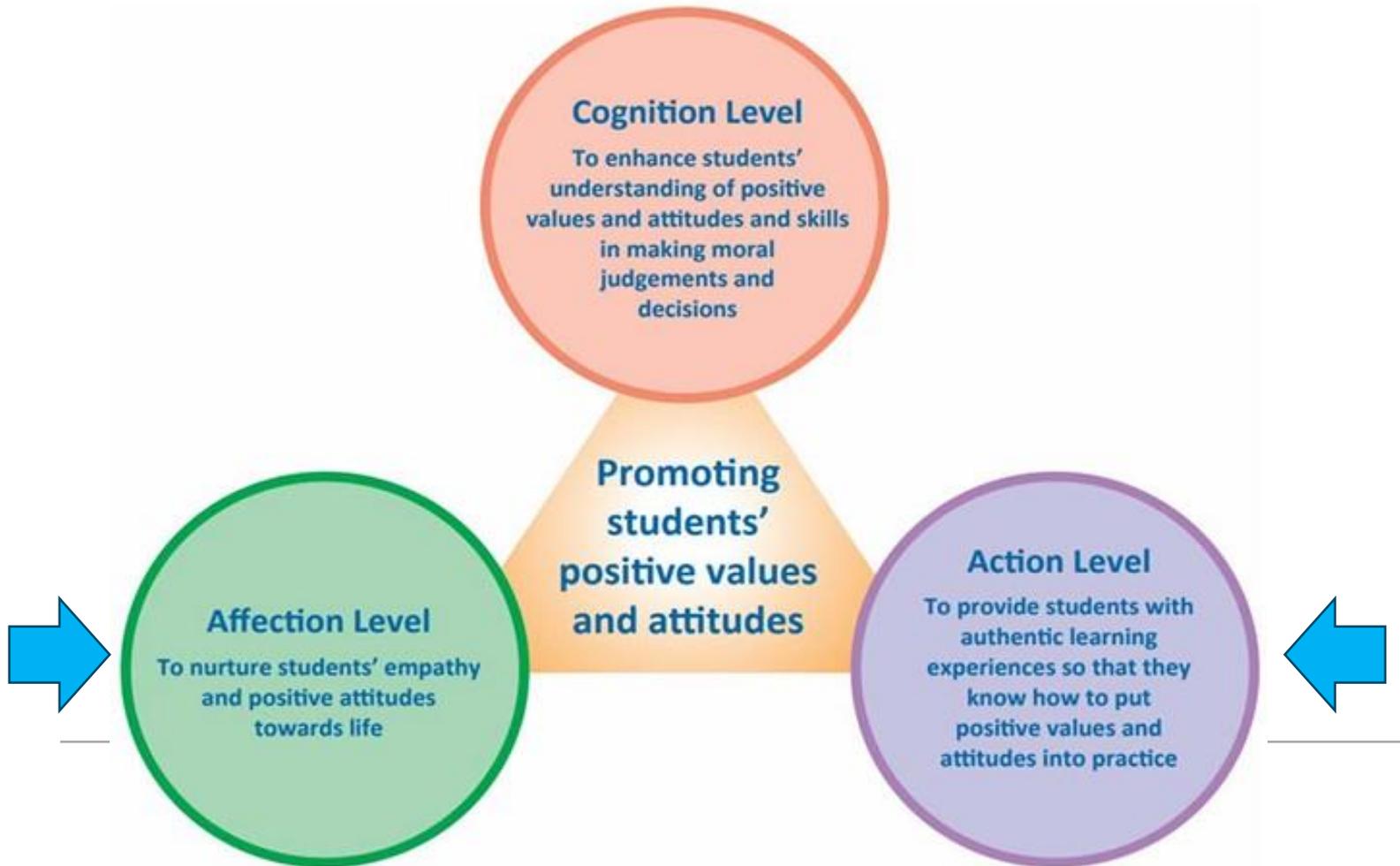


and...?

Our choice of plays

- *S1: Our Town*
 - Set in the fictional town of Grover's Corners in early 20th Century
 - On the everyday lives (work, love, marriage, death, etc.) of the townspeople
 - Target values: **Empathy, Filial Piety**
 - *S2: The Curious Incident of the Dog In the Night-Time*
 - The protagonist Christopher Boone suffers from Asperger's Syndrome / Autism Spectrum Disorder.
 - Christopher attempts to investigate into the killing of a dog and uncovers secrets that are devastating to him.
 - Target values: **Empathy, Respect for Others**
-

Values Education: Cognition, Affection and Action



Source:

[Secondary Education Curriculum Guide \(2017\) - Booklet 6A: Moral and Civic Education: Towards Values Education](#)

Guiding Principles in ELE Curriculum Planning / L & T

- Offer balanced and comprehensive learning activities in the **Interpersonal, Knowledge and Experience Strands**
- Enrich and extend students' language learning experiences in real contexts through English-related **life-wide learning activities** which revolve around the Five Essential Learning Experiences, e.g. Physical and Aesthetic Development
- The study of literary texts should be **connected to the real world and students' daily life.**

Source:
*English Language Education
Key Learning Area
Curriculum Guide (Primary 1 –
Secondary 6) (2017)*

RNCT School-based Support

- Meetings to plan the curriculum, review material design and evaluate support provisions
- Teachers' workshops on ***Story Whoosh!***, thinking routines and literature circles
- Class observations focusing on the implementation of target drama teaching techniques



What is *Story Whoosh!* ?

- Students sit in a circle and listen as the teacher reads the story aloud.
- The teacher calls on students to become different objects and play different characters.
- When the teacher says 'Whoosh', students return to their seats.





It's your turn to
Whoosh!



Teacher	Students
<p>Grover's Corners is a nice town. The earliest tombstones in the cemetery on the hill say 1670-1680, and they have the same names as the people who are still living in the town today: Grovers, Cartwrights, Gibbises, Herseys...</p>	<p>Ss sit in a circle and listen.</p>
<p>It is about dawn and a train whistle is heard. <i>(Call on 1 S to make sound of train whistle)</i></p>	<p>1 S makes sound of train whistle.</p>
<p>Dr Gibbs is walking down Main Street <i>(upstage left)</i>. He is coming back from Polish Town, where he was called to deliver twins. <i>(Call on 1 S to be Dr Gibbs.)</i></p>	<p>1 S mimes Dr Gibbs walking down Main Street on his way home.</p>
<p>In the Gibbs house <i>(downstage right)</i>, Mrs Gibbs comes downstairs to prepare breakfast. She pulls up a window in her kitchen and starts to make a fire in her stove. <i>(Call on 1 S to be Mrs Gibbs.)</i></p>	<p>1 S mimes Mrs Gibbs in her kitchen preparing breakfast.</p>
<p>In the Webb house <i>(downstage left)</i>, Mrs Webb comes downstairs to prepare her breakfast. <i>(Call on 1 S to be Mrs Webb.)</i></p>	<p>1 S mimes Mrs Webb preparing breakfast.</p>

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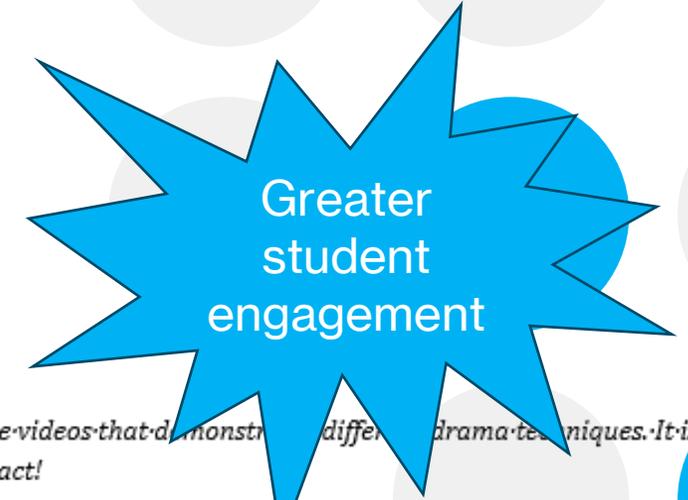
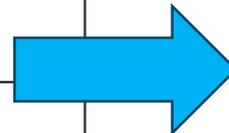


Constructive feedback on material design

In your groups, research on the genre that was assigned to you and complete the following task. When your classmates are presenting about other genres, you should jot notes.

1. Genre dictates the and of the play.

Genre	What are some features of this genre?	Example (featuring Shakespearean and modern plays)	What is this play about?
Comedy			
Tragedy			



Your teacher will play some videos that demonstrate different drama techniques. It is your time to shine, let's try and act!

1. → Mime: pretend to be something / someone else WITHOUT talking 🤫

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9m0_e46xng



3. Form is the mechanism built into the play.

Form	What it includes
Mime	
Musical	
Audience participation	

Mime-activity:

- → A teacher scolding the class
- → An old lady picking up the oranges she dropped



Constructive feedback on material design

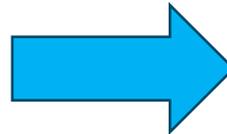
More scaffolding and support

Task 4. Be Your Own Stage Manager

Reflect on your own daily activities. How is ordinariness and repetitiveness present in your lives? How are they precious?

As the Stage Manager of your life, create a **short scene of 1.5 to 2 minutes** to describe your own daily life, mimicking the style of the Stage Manager in the play.

Use this space to plan your ideas!



Task. Be Your Own Stage Manager

Reflect on your environment and the daily activities present in your lives? How are they precious? How is ordinariness and repetitiveness present in your lives? How are they precious?

As the Stage Manager of your life, create a **short monologue scene of 1.5 to 2 minutes** to describe your own daily life, mimicking the style of the Stage Manager in the play. Like the Stage Manager, use **third person perspective** in your description, even if you are talking about yourself.

You can talk about:

- → the neighborhood you live in and your neighbors (in Hong Kong, Mainland China, summer homes, etc.)
- → a part of a day in your life and the people in it

Use this space to plan your ideas!



Here is a simple example by “Anna”:

This is our humble abode in Taikoo, Hong Kong. The date is December 9, 2024. The time is just before dinner. The smell of stir-fried dishes and the sizzle of the wok fill the air. Outside, the sounds of the bustling city fade into the background, replaced by the comfort of home.

Student work

Consolidate understanding

Task 1 The Dead and Living People

In Act III, the setting shifts to a cemetery, where the focus is on the deceased residents of the town. This act explores themes of life, death, and the passage of time, providing a poignant reflection on the lives of the characters.



The dead characters were still on stage and did not move, who are they and how did they pass away?

Who?	How did they pass away?
1. Emily Webb	childbirth
2. Julia	Pneumonia
3. Simon Stimson	committed suicide by hanging himself
4. Wally Web	A burst appendix while on a Boy Scout trip



The living characters in Act III are primarily those who visit the cemetery or are remembered by the deceased. Who are they and why were they visiting the cemetery?

Who?	Why were they visiting the cemetery?
1. George Gibbs	To visit Emily as he is the husband
2. Doc Gibbs	George's father, still alive and is part of the living community.

The interactions between the living people and the dead people highlight the ongoing connection between past and present, and the enduring impact of relationships and memories.

Group 2
(pages 12-15)

The Gibbs and Webb children eat breakfast



Mrs. Gibbs complains to Dr. Gibbs that lately x George is lazy. (their son)
 Her daughter Rebecca complains that she love to swimmy x (her dress is ugly)
 George complains that he want more money to buy thing ✓

In the house next door, Mrs. Webb calls for her children to wake up ✓
Wally ✓ comes down and chews very fast because he is studying for a test. Emily claims she is the brightest girl ✓ in school.

• What is your first impression about these families? Write down one thing positive and one thing negative.
A heart-warming place with my family members, but a lot argument at there too. (warmth and care)

Student work

- what do you appreciate in your life right now? *family, having a lot of friends*
- What do you want to be remembered by? *I am Chloe Pan, and she will always help others*
- What are things that you struggle to let go of? *my family*
- After reading this book and analyzing the various perspectives toward life and death, is it easier for you to let go of those things now? *Not really*

I truly appreciate my life with my family and having lots of friends right now. They have been with me since I was born or have been growing up with me all these years, which makes them very precious and I'm very grateful to have them with me by my side. They love, care and support me in everything I do and it means the world to me.

If it weren't for them, I wouldn't be able to be who I am now, and I hope my family and friends, along with other people around me, will always remember me as 'Chloe Pan' and the one who always helps others. However, I believe I struggle to let go of my family most as we've built so many unforgettable memories together, which are too valuable to me. In addition, I've learnt to treasure time from reading the book, so I will continue to enjoy life to the fullest. Even if letting go still won't be easy, it may be better when I don't live with any regrets and have done my best.

Draw upon life experiences

Phase 2: Interviewing the adults

Now it's your turn to give Emily and George advice.

Instructions:

Interview parents / family members / any other adults who are married on romantic relationships with the following questions. Write your answers in the speech bubbles provided.

Q1: How did you two meet?



One day, me and my father went to a hospital to visit my sick mother, I met her in the hospital that time.

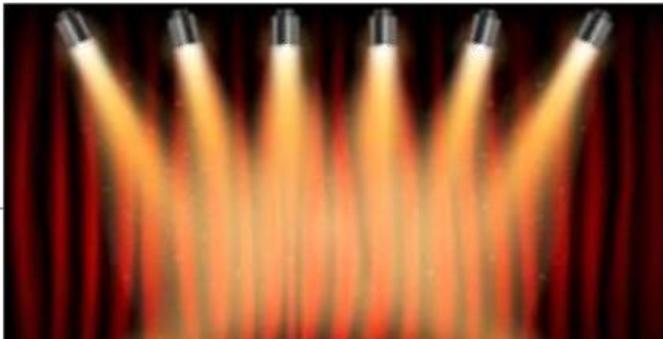


That time me and his father were in a business relationship, and that time his mother was sick, so I went to the hospital to visit her, I met him at that day.

Student work

Soon, I found that I felt nervous when I look at the audience. I even can't ^{lot more} say my line fluently when I look at them. I was frustrated. Luckily, My friend told me that you don't have to look at the actual faces of them, you can look at their hair, their noses. I feel pretty thankful because the method works. ✓ Glad you've found a way!

Still, the small challenge didn't affect my experience at the drama workshop. This workshop was brilliant. It really let me start to love drama. Yay! Happy to know!



Appreciate your hard work and effort. WY! Good try getting involved. You'll learn a lot!

100/100 😊

Celebrate growth

I have understand how the theatre works from the first workshop to the last one. I have understand how to act to be a stage manager & understand how to manage the lighting, the most significant takeaway is the part when every sence change, the most challenging is speaking out loud but I overcame it, after the workshop, I learnt that we should always collaborate with others.







Let's hear from our S1 teachers!



The teacher workshops are very well structured and provided us with **very suitable and practical pedagogical strategies to be implemented in the SSC context**. The officers are tremendously supportive as they provided very thoughtful and applicable feedback on our worksheet designs.

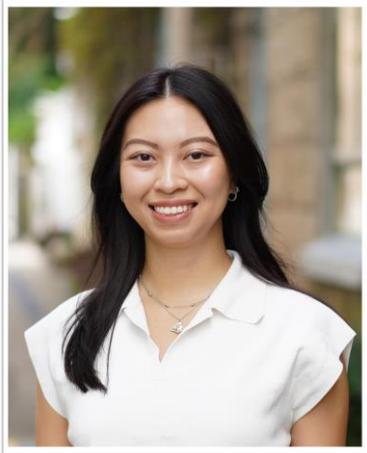
Ms Judy Leung (Assistant English Panel Chairperson)

What I found especially delightful was how the programme **encouraged even the quieter students to step out of their shells**. Seeing the enthusiasm of their more outgoing peers gave them the confidence to participate, and it was heartening to witness their willingness to engage in ways they might not have otherwise.

Ms Claire Tam (S1 Coordinator)



Let's hear from our S1 teachers!



Drama in education is a **great success in cultivating students' creativity, imagination, and confidence**. Students particularly enjoyed the Story Whoosh! activity, where they were able to imagine themselves as different characters or even objects, like a friendly choo choo train or an uncooperative horse.

Ms Jasmine Hui

The **literature circles** workshop allowed me to clearly visualize the logistics and the interactions between the expert group and the fishbowl group. I also found **the approach of having students lead the discussion** very inspiring, as it gives them full freedom to express their opinions. The students truly became fish swimming freely in the tank, and the audience was clearly amused by their engagement.

Ms Fiona Pang



Let's hear from our S1 teachers!



Looking back, the teacher training was an invaluable professional development experience (very grateful to the EDB NET section!). The workshops masterfully blended curriculum design with applied drama strategies, **moving beyond theory into practical pedagogy.**

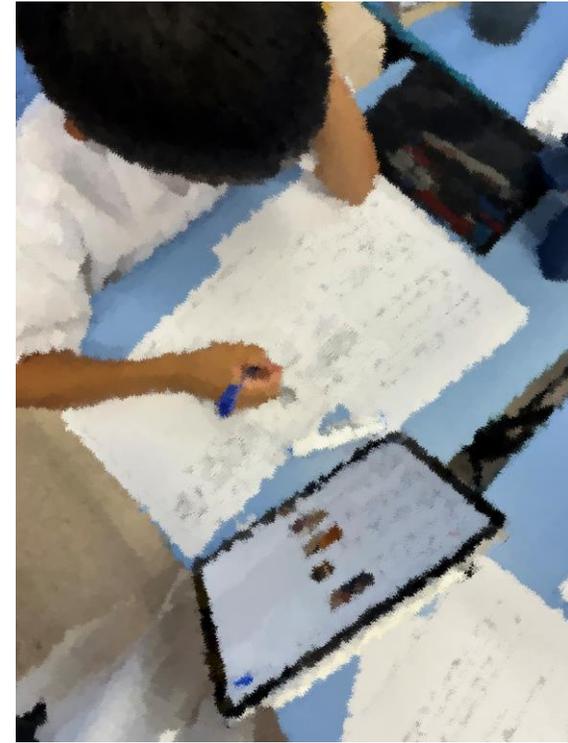
Ms Cheyenne Chan

I implemented **literature circles** in my senior forms for analysing more abstract novels, and it proved to be a **more interactive form of fishbowl discussion that did not compromise the literature demands of their level.**

Ms Natalie Chan



Literature Circles



Reflections

Achievements

- **Confidence booster** (spoken English) for all students
- Remarkable **personal growth and team spirit** demonstrated by all classes
- A great **professional development** opportunity for teachers

Limitations

- Initial reluctance / fear among teachers and students
- Time-consuming coordination between teachers on drama activities

School-based Support in 2025-26...

- Same programme design for S1 (*Our Town*)
- Timeline for S2 (*The Curious Incident of the Dog In the Night-Time*)
 - September – December 2025: Teachers study suggested teaching plan by the NET Section and draft materials
 - December 2025: Teachers' workshops on **reciprocal teaching** and **rolling theatre**
 - January 2026: NET Section reviews and teachers revise materials for use
 - January – March 2026: Teaching of the play as a literary text (theme, plot, characterisation, etc.) incorporating elements of reciprocal teaching
 - April – May 2026: Project work on rolling theatre and performance in class





Thank you!

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