

PRIMARY LEARNING EXPERIENCES

STAGES 2 AND 3

LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOCUS

Building the context to the story of Storm Boy. Exploring place.

ACTIVITY ONE Mapping

RESOURCES
Five pieces of butchers' paper and pens.
Book – *Storm Boy* by Colin Thiele.

TIME
30 minutes

Ask students to find their own space in the room and lie on the floor with their eyes closed. Read the following section from the book *Storm Boy* to students. If you have a copy of the book by Colin Thiele, these lines are taken from the first page. You can also show students the picture on page 8.

Storm Boy lived between the Coorong and the sea. His home was the long, long snout of sandhill and scrub that curves away south-eastwards from the Murray Mouth. A wild strip it is, windswept and tussocky, with the flat shallow water of the South Australian Coorong on one side and the endless slam of the Southern Ocean on the other. They call it the Ninety Mile Beach. From thousands of miles around the cold, wet underbelly of the world the waves come sweeping in towards the shore and pitch down in a terrible ruin of white water and spray. (pg. 7)

Storm Boy lived with Hideaway Tom, his father. Their home was a rough little humpy made of wood and brush and flattened sheets of iron from old tins. It had a dirt floor, two blurry bits of glass for windows, and a little crooked chimney made of stove-pipes and wire. (pg. 10)

2 Brainstorm the different things that can be found on a beach and what the book has told them about what is in the area. Write these on the board.

3 Divide students into groups of five. In their groups, students are to draw a pictorial or a real view map of the beach and the Coorong where Storm Boy lives.

4 Students stand and present their maps to the class.

5 In the same groups of five, students are to now choose one aspect of their map and create a freeze frame. For example this could be the humpy or the sanctuary. Explain to students that a freeze frame is like a photo – a still image that does not move and has no speaking.

6 Allocate a space in the room that is the performance space and an audience space. One by one, ask groups to stand up and present their freeze frame of where Storm Boy lives to the rest of the class

PRIMARY LEARNING EXPERIENCES

STAGES 2 AND 3 (CONT.)

EXTENSION

1 All students stand in the space. They begin clicking their fingers. The teacher is to act as a conductor. When the teacher taps them on the shoulder they can move on to clapping their hands together, when they are tapped again they can move to clapping their hands to knees. When they are tapped again they can move on to slapping the carpet. The teacher is to make sure that some students are not tapped so that some students remain clicking, others remain slapping their knees etc. This will allow for variation in the sounds and rhythm.

2 One student can act as Storm Boy, moving slowly around the space in between other students, occasionally stopping to pick up things on the beach in the storm.

3 Two students can be allocated to the piece of fabric, and be positioned on either end to create a wave.

PRIMARY LEARNING EXPERIENCES

STAGES 2 AND 3 (CONT.)

LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOCUS

Exploring character

ACTIVITY ONE Role on the Wall

1 Students move into pairs. They are allocated one of the following characters: Hideaway Tom, Storm Boy, Mr. Percival and Fingerbone Bill.

RESOURCES Butcher's paper and pens

2 One person is to lie down on the butcher's paper and the other person is to draw around them, creating a silhouette. Use another piece of paper to draw an outline of the bird.

TIME 15 minutes

3 Together the pairs are to write on the inside of the silhouette words to describe the personality of the character. On the outside of the silhouette they are to write what the character looks like.

4 The silhouettes are shared with the class.

ACTIVITY TWO Sculpting / Artist and Clay

1 Students in pairs. Allocate Person A and Person B.

RESOURCES Nil

2 Person A is an artist and Person B is the thinking clay.

3 Person A is to mould Person B into the character of Storm Boy. Encourage students to think about levels, facial expressions etc.

TIME 15 minutes

4 Once everyone has finished moulding, all the characters are to freeze. The artists are to walk around the room and look at all the different Storm Boy's. It is an art gallery, so remind students they aren't to touch the sculptures.

5 Students return to their pairs and swap roles. Now moulding into Hideaway Tom.

6 This process can be repeated with all the characters including Mr.Percival.

PRIMARY LEARNING EXPERIENCES

STAGES 2 AND 3 (CONT.)

ACTIVITY THREE Hot Seat

RESOURCES
Five chairs

TIME
15 minutes

- Place five chairs at the front of the room.
- Ask five students to come up and sit on the chairs in front of the class.
- Each of the five students is Storm Boy. Allocate students Storm Boy 1,2,3,4 and 5.
- Students are to turn to the person next to them and briefly discuss what they want to know from speaking to Storm Boy. What questions do they want to ask him?
- The class can ask the different Storm Boy's questions. Such as "Do you get lonely being the only boy in the Coorong?" or "What is your favourite activity to do?" or "How did you feel when you let the pelicans out into the wild?"

This can be repeated with all the characters.

ACTIVITY FOUR Diary entry

RESOURCES
Exercise book and pencil

TIME
20 minutes

- Students are to write a diary entry in role as Storm Boy. They are to write the diary entry of the moments after Storm Boy let the three pelicans go out into the wild.
- As stimulus read the following excerpt taken from the book Storm Boy by Colin Thiele.

Storm Boy pressed his head against Mr. Percival's and gave his friend a last soft squeeze. "Goodbye, Mr. Percival," he said. He had to pause for a second to clear his throat. "Be a...good pelican, Mr. Percival, and look after yourself." He lifted him over the side of the boat and put him down on the water as if he were a big rubber duck. Mr. Percival looked surprised and pained for a minute and floated up and down on the ripples. They he lifted his big wins, pedaled strongly, and rose slowly up over the water. Storm Boy brushed at his eye with his knuckles and looked away. He didn't want his father to see his face.
(pg. 34)

- To encourage a solemn atmosphere, play some slow emotive music in the background.

SECONDARY LEARNING EXPERIENCES

STAGES 4,5 AND 6

LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOCUS

How do you perform sad stories in children's theatre?

ACTIVITY ONE

The Taboo of Sadness

RESOURCES

Article – The Taboo of Sadness by Finegan Kruckemeyer

TIME

30 minutes

1 Discuss with students why Storm Boy could be considered a sad story and where the sadness is present in the story.

2 Hand out copies of the article he Taboo of Sadness available as the handout on our website.

3 Read the article together as a class and discuss the following questions. Answers can be brainstormed on the board.

- Should we present sad stories on stage for children? Why or why not?
- Why is theatre an effective medium for telling sad stories?
- What are the positives and negatives arguments for presenting sadness in Children's Theatre?
- What do we want students to feel when watching a sad story on stage? What don't we want students to feel?
- What do we want students to think? What don't want to think?
- What do we want students to know?
- How should sadness in Children's Theatre be portrayed?
- How should it not be portrayed?

ACTIVITY TWO

Style and Conventions of Children's Theatre

RESOURCES

Pens and paper

TIME

10 minutes

1 Groups of Four. Using a pen and paper, ask students to brainstorm styles and conventions that can be used in Children's Theatre.

2 Share these with the class.

SECONDARY LEARNING EXPERIENCES

STAGES 4,5 AND 6 (CONT.)

ACTIVITY THREE

Performing sad scenes

RESOURCES
A sad children's book
such as *Amy and Louis* by
Libby Gleeson and
Freya Blackwood
or *Harry and Hopper*
by Margaret Wild
and Freya Blackwood.

Soft, emotive music.

TIME
One – two lessons

1 Read the chosen book as a class. Choose the pivotal sad moment in the book.

2 Allocate students into groups of five. Students are to re-create that moment using different Children's Theatre styles and conventions chosen from below.

- Narration accompanied by mime.
- A series of frozen images that transition from one to the other, accompanied by a suitable piece of music.
- A realism scene.
- A non-realism and symbolic performance using stylised and ritualised voice and movement including unison, repetition, chorus, interesting use of shapes on stage.

3 Perform each scene in front of the class.

4 Discuss as a class which performance worked most effectively in portraying the sad moment for an audience of children and why.

SECONDARY LEARNING EXPERIENCES

STAGES 4,5 AND 6 (CONT.)

EXTENSION Write a 300-400 word analytical reflection deconstructing how the sad moment was effectively created using the chosen styles and conventions and dramatic elements to bring to life the world of the play while strengthening the storytelling in the Children's Theatre piece.

Compiled by Hannah Brown.

The activities and resources contained in this document are designed for educators as the starting point for developing more comprehensive lessons for this production. Hannah Brown is the Education Projects Officers for the Sydney Theatre Company. You can contact Hannah on hbrown@sydneytheatre.com.au

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