Drama Curriculum Units
with examples of teaching activities
Form 1

Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education
Curriculum Management and eLearning Department
Malta 2012
Drama Curriculum
DRAMA CURRICULUM UNITS – FORM 1

**DRM 7.1**  LET’S POLISH IT (Are you listening?)

**DRM 7.2**  HOW DO I BEHAVE (Are you watching?)

**DRM 7.3**  WE BECOME SOMEONE ELSE
OBJECTIVES
The teacher will:
1. help the students to control breathing and to articulate words and phrases clearly (S1)
2. help the students to think about the sounds we make when we are speaking (S1)
3. help the students to find different ways of saying and speaking words so as to change mood, character and intention. (S1)
4. help the students to modulate voice to change the meaning of words and phrases and to realize and use the best voice to portray character and intention. (S1)
5. help the students to recognise where the focus lies in a given work. (S3)

Key Words
Clarity, Diction, Voice projection.
Pace.
Body language.
Action, Freeze.
Mood, Atmosphere, Intention.

Points to note
The approach to teaching and learning of Drama is based on: Voice Technique, Acting Technique, Movement, Creating Emotions and Interpretation; Working Alone and With Others, Communication, Improvisation leading to Performance; Appreciating and Evaluating own work and that of others, including local and international playwrights.

These three strands help the students to be creative, and experience enjoyment and provide enjoyment to others, as well as to understand the society they live in, by: responding to ideas and issues and to communicate meaning to others through the use of Drama forms; developing and exploring ideas and structuring them into meaningful Drama works; communicating their intentions to others using performing and production skills; evaluating the effectiveness of a piece of Drama work and recognising the significance of historical, cultural and social influences.

Resources
Scripts by various contemporary authors, local and foreign.
Newspapers, local and foreign.
CD player, and a selection of musical tracks showing different moods.
Creative Drama In Groupwork by Sue Jennings. Speechmark Publishing Ltd.
GCSE Drama For Edexcel by Ken Taylor and Jos Leeder . Hodder &Stoughton
The Complete GCSE Drama Course by Mike Gould. Folens.
The Library at the Drama Unit
## Teaching Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The teacher will:</th>
<th>Examples of teaching experiences and activities</th>
<th>Indicators of learning outcomes</th>
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<tr>
<td>help the students to control breathing and to articulate words and phrases clearly.</td>
<td>It is important to start the lesson with movement exercises. Walking is an excellent warm up, and you can exercise on different rhythms and even imagined situations, as well as Freeze. Students should be encouraged to listen to their breathing while so doing. Help the students to realize what happens when they breathe in, and when they breathe out. Explain about the diaphragm and exercise on breathing from the diaphragm and not from the chest. Have the students practice all the sounds of the language in turn, so that the mouth and tongue become familiar with the special features of each. Practice not to swallow sounds so as to avoid losing words or parts of. The repetition of consonants in front of vowels in a sequence is helpful. For example: Ba, ba, ba, ba; be, be, be, be, be; bi, bi, bi, bi; bo, bo, bo, bo; bu, bu, bu, bu. Practice the sounds in different ways, for example: short “spat out” sounds, and longer drawn-out sounds. Become aware of the sounds we make when we speak, not just the words but also the “hemm, “ “eh”, “amm”, the intake of breath and the movements of our bodies and feet and hands. In pairs, work on given simple dialogues and try to make them sound “natural”, then learn them by heart and keep practicing. For example: A. Haw. (Hi) B. Xie? (What?) A. X’ghandek? (What’s the matter with you? Or What’s wrong?) B. Eh? (Eh?)</td>
<td>The students will:</td>
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</table>
help the students to find different ways of saying and speaking words, to change mood, character and intention.

| A. Smajtni? (Are you listening? Or Have you heard what I said?) |
| B. Ija, sorry. X’ghedtli? (Yes. Sorry. What did you say? Or What have you told me?) |
| A. Xejn. Insiha. (Nothing. Forget it.) |

Make conscious and unconscious decisions about the two people involved, A and B. One of them may be being ignored, or else is bored, or feels guilty and so on. Work with vocal effects to portray what you think is happening to affect the way the character comes across.

Examples of vocal effects:
- The speed at which you speak
- The volume – whether it is quiet or loud
- The stress you place on individual words, or parts of words
- The speed of response (how quickly one person’s words follow the others)
- The phrasing – the musicality of each word or sound.

Break up “ordinary” dialogue and make it come alive and mean something. Play around with it so that words start to have different emphases, or stand out suddenly.
- Say the dialogue with random lines, in any order you wish.
- Repeat the dialogue, but say it in reverse with the last line first.
- Take your individual lines (A or B) for a walk around the room, saying them minus the responses.

Without speaking, think about your lines. Decide at least three basic things about the dialogue:
- How quickly are you going to speak
- A particular line you are going to emphasise or draw attention to
- A basic “attitude” for your character (e.g. cross, bored, nervous, etc.)

Discuss each line, explaining how you intend to say it and deciding how quickly you will speak or respond, and when.

Perform the dialogue.

control their voice and to portray different moods and meaning with intention. (Level 8)
change the meaning through vocal effects. (Level 7)
produce different sounds with clarity and intention. (level 6)
<table>
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<tr>
<th>(5 lessons)</th>
<th>help the students to modulate voice to change the meaning of words and phrases and to realize and use the best voice to portray character and intention.</th>
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<td>Create similar dialogues, perhaps adding some longer phrases, with particular characters in mind. Do the same things with them as for the previous dialogues.</td>
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<td>Start with a warm up activity each time. The warm up activity could take the form of a game which requires quick thinking and movement.</td>
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<td>Work in pairs to create still images, where one student places a partner in a still image to show “intention” of the character they are portraying. This can be done by actually moving and “sculpting” the partner as well as by verbal instruction.</td>
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<td>Work with still images. Sculptor and sculpture. One student positions individuals in the group in relation to one another to create a still image to convey an emotion or a situation involving the characters they are portraying.</td>
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<td>Put words or a spoken commentary to still images. Select any sequence of dialogue, perhaps seven or eight lines, featuring more than one character. In pairs, or as a group if there are more than two characters, play the lines, paying special attention to the opening word of each – either by clearer speech, or with louder voices.</td>
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<td>Work on articulation and proper breathing to create clear diction and voice projection. Continue practicing the exercises done in the previous lessons.</td>
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<td>It is important to listen as opposed to hear. Many times we take things for granted, even when we are making a conversation. Many times we tend to “translate” mentally words and phrases not spoken clearly. When we listen as opposed to hear we can realize that words and phrases may not be spoken clearly. Work on clarity.</td>
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| (2 lessons) | produce different sounds with clarity. (Level 5)  
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|            | use the right pace and voice to portray intention, emotion and mood and, therefore, interpret the character they are portraying clearly and effectively. (Level 8)  
|            | express intention, emotion and mood by modulating their voice, and therefore, interpret the character they are portraying with good effect. (Level 7)  
|            | choose the right voice to suit the character they are portraying, thus interpreting it with some effect.. (Level 6)  
|            | produce different rhythms and qualities of sound to convey and portray different emotions and situations. (Level 5)  
|            | produce different sounds with clarity. (Level 5)  
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| help the students to recognise where the focus lies in a given work. | **Appreciation and Evaluation**  
Let’s present our work  

Work with music to create atmosphere and mood.  

Work on scenes created by the students and examine character behaviour. Freeze a scene during an in-role activity and ask the students to reveal their inner thoughts at a particular moment in the scene.  

Freezing the movement helps the students to observe how they are standing, the space they are occupying, the distance from others, and whether all the available space is being made use of.  

Have them reflect on the actions taken by the different characters and consider alternative actions. The students work on understanding why they took certain decisions, and whether these decisions have been realized properly.  

| discuss the performances they have watched and reflect on their criticism. (Level 8)  
explain why they made certain decisions in their presentation. (Level 7)  
recognize where the focus of a presentation lies. (Level 6)  
observe with attention the work of others. (Level 5) |
Objective:

1. help the students to discuss people they know or know of, and talk about their characteristics, mannerisms, and the way they talk. (S1)
2. help the students to find how these characters behave in given situations(S1)
3. help the students to combine body language and facial expressions with voice and words (S2)
4. help the students to improvise scenes involving characters they are familiar with (S2)

Key Words

- Characteristics, mannerisms, status.
- Improvisation and interpretation.
- Mood, Atmosphere, Intention

Points to note

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<th>Examples of teaching experiences and activities</th>
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<td>The students will:</td>
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<td>help the students to discuss people they know or know of, and talk about their characteristics, mannerisms, and the way they talk.</td>
<td>Walking around the space always finding their own space the students think of people they know or know of while so doing. Freeze the walk and the students strike a posture to represent the person they are thinking of. It is important that they focus on one person and try to recreate with as much precision as possible.</td>
<td>Artistic and Technical Skills, and Interpretation. Let’s think about our actions and those of others.</td>
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<td>Repeat the walk and on freeze the students apart from taking the posture speak a phrase which they consider typical of the person they are focusing on.</td>
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<td>Work in pairs to create still images. It is important that the students focus on the various parts of the body, their angles, shapes, weight and texture.</td>
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<td>Each student now moulds their partner’s body, as if it were clay, into a statue that represents the person (character) they had focused on. Speaking is not allowed and the partner must be ‘clay’ and allow the ‘sculptor’ to do the moulding. However the partner must leave limbs in the position they have been placed. Ideally the ‘sculptor’ should use only one finger to mould the statue.</td>
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<td>Reverse role when each student has finished.</td>
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<td>Hot seating is fine way of having the students answer questions asked by others in character. Like this all the students get to know all the characters created.</td>
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<td>To create stories involving the characters, group the characters of different students so that they interact in given situations. Four characters per group seem to be the ideal.</td>
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<td>The ‘given’ situations should be everyday situations. The situations are to be presented through action alone.</td>
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<tr>
<td>help the students to find</td>
<td>Each group tells the story rising from the given situation in a series of four statues. Each</td>
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| how these characters behave in given situations | statue is a frozen mime involving the entire group. It is like a photograph of that moment in time and space.  

Practice these statues until the students can move seamlessly from one to the other so that the whole series of statues becomes one slide show of images. It is important to remember that these statues do not speak.  

Individually the students do the actions of a ‘simple’ everyday activity, like what they do from the time they wake up and leave for school. Include some incident that changes the ‘simple’ ‘everyday activity.’  

It is important to realize that it is possible to tell a whole drama without a single word being said. The main thing is that the sequence of events follows a logical sequence. Each single action should be clear before moving to the next in the sequence of events. Focus is all-important:  
**Moment:** A man getting ready for an interview  
**Gesture:** With the tips of his fingers he brushes hairs from his jacket whilst looking at the mirror.  
**Meaning:** Conveys concern with appearance.  

This can be developed further.  
**Gesture:** The man moves away from the mirror, looks at his jacket, stops before having gone three paces, returns and brushes the same spot again.  
**Meaning:** Conveys an over-anxious nature that can be played on later in the scene.  

The range of simple everyday movements that we take for granted becomes all-important in the presentation of a scene. Some examples are:  

- Sitting down in a chair  
- Standing up again  
- Getting out of bed  
- Using a knife and fork  

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<tr>
<th>(3 lessons)</th>
<th>help the students to combine body language and facial expressions with voice and words</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drinking from a glass or cup</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Opening a door</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Closing a door</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Walking from one spot to another.</td>
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<td>Apply some or all of these actions to the characters focused upon.</td>
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**Communication and Performance**

Different types of movement and gesture enhance characterization and storytelling.

Start with a warm up activity each time. Individually the students curl themselves into a ball, on their haunches, with hands tucked round their legs and as close to the ground without actually sitting on it as they can.

Slowly, and with control, gently they unfold their body until they are standing on tiptoes with hands raised high in the air. This is done to the count of ten and the stretched position is only reached by the count ‘ten’.

Reverse the process, again to the count of ten, showing full control of movement. Keep repeating until the students are all showing control and gradual movement with the count of ten.

Repeat the process, but this time they do it as a burst of power, going from the crouched position leaping into the air, shouting, “YES!” This time they do not return to the ‘ball’.

Practice these moves until they can interchange from ‘explosion’ to ‘control’ reasonably effortlessly.

Work on the dialogues used in the previous Unit, or create similar ones. This time introduce Status. Status determines the body language and the facial expressions as well.

<table>
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<th>(Level 6)</th>
<th>describe people in detail and associate emotions to them (Level 5)</th>
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<td></td>
<td>find new ways of creating colourful and interesting characters. (Level 8)</td>
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<td>work with character through the use of body language and facial expressions (Level 7)</td>
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<td>understand that body language and facial expressions help to convey character (Level 6)</td>
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<td>interact in character with characters created by others (Level 5)</td>
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as the tone of voice.

Status is on a scale of ten, ten being the highest. As a rule of thumb:
The range 1-3 represents FEAR or FAITH. It applies to those characters that are the underdogs, the suffering, and the lower social strata, those with little or no power.

The range 4-7 represents ANGER or HOPE. It applies to those characters that have some power but are somehow restricted in using it, yet are stronger than the 1-3 range characters.

The range 8-10 represents HATRED or LOVE. These are the strongest characters, characters that have power and can use it.

Work on physical representation of Status. Start with One and the student doing it must lie low and close to the floor, showing bodily and facially the state of mind e.g. Fear. Continue with Two, with the student doing it relating to the student doing One by making physical and emotional contact, while taking a slightly higher position.

Continue to Ten, each time the students making physical and emotional contact with the student preceding them and each time taking a higher physical position until we have a statue that rises from One to Ten.

Work on the aesthetic value of the statue, so that students realize they are contributing to the effectiveness of the whole thing. Insist on contact and the body language as well as the facial expressions.

Repeat this work by splitting the class in groups of four or five. Keep working on it until the students realize the importance of body language and facial expressions in characterization.

(3 lessons)
help the students to improvise scenes involving characters they are familiar with
(3 lessons)

It is important to note that no matter the Status, characters can be ‘good’, ‘bad’ or neutral.

In speaking the dialogues, the students have to decide upon the Status of the character they are interpreting and apply the right body language, facial expressions and voice.

Using the characters that have been created, and the dialogues from previous lessons, build scenes involving two characters at first. Then proceed into building scenes involving more characters. Realise that with more characters the space has to be shared properly; otherwise some characters will not be ‘visible’ to the audience.

act out improvised scenes involving characters created by them (Level 8)

show how characters behave in given situations (Level 7)

make good use of space while acting improvised scenes. (Level 6)

understand how varying distances between characters changes a situation (Level 5)
Subject: DRAMA
Unit code and title: DRM 7.3 WE BECOME SOMEONE ELSE
Strand 1: Artistic and Technical Skills, and Interpretation.
Strand 2: Communication and Performance.

Unit Duration: 9 sessions of 40 minutes; Total 6 hours

OBJECTIVES

The teacher will:
1. help the students to work more deeply with Status (S1)
2. help the students to portray and convey, in character, different emotions according to different situations (S1)
3. help the students to take on character by becoming it(S1)
4. help the students to Improve their work by more practice and better staging. (S2)

Key Words

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<th>Resources</th>
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<td>Take on character.</td>
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<tr>
<td>We become someone else.</td>
<td>Newspapers, local and foreign.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Status.</td>
<td>CD player, and a selection of musical tracks showing different moods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set, resources, props, furniture.</td>
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The Library At the Drama Unit, Blata ‘l-Bajda.
Teaching objectives | Examples of teaching experiences and activities | Indicators of learning outcomes
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The teacher will: | Artistic and Technical Skills, and Interpretation. Who are we? | The students will:
| help the students to work more deeply with Status | | |

After starting with warm up exercises, like walking around the space and stopping to look at others, then resume walking before stopping before someone else and observe features and expressions, start working in pairs to understand more clearly how status affects relations.

Work with simple dialogue. For example:

- A. Haw. (Hello)
- B. Hello. (Hello)
- A. Ilek hawn? (Have you been here long?)
- B. Mhux wisq. (No, not really)
- A. Nista’ nghinek? (Can I help you?)
- B. Le, m’ghandi bżonn xejn. (No, I din’t need anything.)

Learn the lines. Then speak them:
- with some distance in between but facing each other
- facing each other rather close
- standing side by side, close and far
- standing behind each other, close and far.

Mix the positions.

What emerges about the characters as a result? ‘Turning one’s back’ is often a shorthand for ignoring someone or showing displeasure.

Continue the dialogue as an improvisation, choosing a starting position and see how it changes. Limit improvisation to a top of five minutes.

Try the dialogue again but this time use a chair. Discuss the function of the chair. It can symbolize power (This is mine) or weakness (lower in height), or any number of possibilities.
help the students to portray and convey, in character, different emotions according to different situations

- Try the dialogue again, with or without the chair, and introduce any one of the following forms of physical contact:
  - a light touch on the arm at some point in the dialogue
  - a hug
  - a kiss on the cheek

- Discuss how the introduction of the gesture changed the relationship, or how it changed the perception of the character. Did the character seem more intimate? More in control? Less in control?

- Realise that in performance, care should be taken that any gestures, or changes in position, are not accidental as it may have a profound effect on the way the drama is seen. A gesture can change Status, for instance, if it is not done at the right time or in the right way.

- For example: If the touch on the arm is introduced at the start, it can be rejected by B who might be making the point, “If you’re looking for affection or forgiveness, think again.”

- If it is introduced by B after A’s last line, it might be seen as an act of reconciliation. But there may be more variations. Explore and discover and discuss.

- The aim is to realize that gesture and Status go together and can never be accidental. Every gesture needs to be planned well. If status is not clearly seen the audience will be at a loss.

- Consolidate Status through still images again.

- In groups of four or five, create statues where every student represents one level of Status. Wherever it starts, the Status of each rise by one. For example: The statue starts at Status Level Three. The other students are Level Four, Level Five, Level Six, Level Seven.

realize that in every situation characters have a Status Level
Give verbal stimuli (Themes) and the statue shows that situation, but each student keeps the same Status as before. For Example: Childhood, Forest, Fear, Wisdom, Anger.

Insist on physical and emotional contact as in the previous Unit. Always using verbal stimuli (Themes) each group creates a story on four still images (as in the previous Unit), keeping Status.

Observe how different groups have managed to tell a different story, depending, for example, on what Status Level they started from, the positions each character takes in respect to others, distance.

The basis of all acting is WE BECOME SOMEONE ELSE.

It is not good enough to pretend being someone else. If an incident is not happening to us, then we can sympathize but are not directly concerned. Whereas if it is happening to us then we cannot help being concerned.

When facing an audience an actor presents his body, his face, his eyes, his voice and the spoken word. Five things. We can see this on the five fingers of the right hand.

The thumb represents the body: it is not the longest but surely the thickest. We use the thumb for many actions which require strength. So we realize that the body carries the bulk of the character we are interpreting.

The index represents the face, and is used to point, to indicate direction, to accuse. It is longer than the thumb and very flexible in use. This shows how flexible are facial muscles and how it is through the use of these muscles that we make different facial expressions which is clearly defined and which affects the relation with other characters (Level 8)

portray and convey, in character, different emotions according to given situations(Level 7)

deal in character with unforeseen situations(Level 6)

understand that the ACTION and the WORD need to be combined for character building(Level 5)
The third finger, the middle one, which is the longest, and therefore most visible, represents the eyes. It is central. This shows how central to characterization are the eyes. Indeed the eyes really determine that we become someone else. It is how we manage to look at others and see them, and thus send that message to the brain, that makes us another person.

The fourth finger represents the voice. It is not such a strong finger and depends a lot on the others. In the same way the voice of a character depends on the body, face and eyes. But it conveys mood and intention in a very clear way and together with the previous three constitutes the ACTION.

The little finger is the WORD. It is the little finger that helps the other fingers close into a fist. Without it the fist is not complete or strong enough.

Work on making these five elements work together and in harmony.

If we use the five fingers on the left hand, we can see how, having really worked to suit the ACTION to the WORD, and the WORD to the ACTION (as represented on the right hand,) the actor becomes someone else (the thumb), and shows what and who he is to the others (the index), what and who are the others to him (middle finger), where the action takes place (fourth finger) and what is happening (little finger).

All these must become real. The actor lives the situation. But, naturally, controls everything by his ability as an actor. He is the puppet and puppeteer. The audience sees the puppet, but it is the puppeteer that gives the puppet its life.

Find a scene from a play that has the same number of characters as the number of students in each group, making sure that the parts are within reach of each. Some may be able to tackle more lines than others, for instance.

Produce a scene, identifying to show character, mood, intention etc.

become another person in interpreting a character, making good use of body, face, eyes, voice and combine all well with the spoken word (Level 8)

work with character through the use of body language and facial expressions (Level 7)

understand that body language and facial expressions help to convey character (Level 6)

interact in character with characters created by others (Level 5)
| Improve their work by more practice and better staging. | Falling back on the work done in this Unit as well as the previous ones, get the students to rehearse their scene. They decide on how to present it. Discuss their reasons for making certain choice. Make sure the focus of the piece is recognized, the relations between the characters understood, the Status of each established.  
Create a set, including furniture and props to present their piece, after rehearsing it thoroughly. Find the right kind of music to help create the atmosphere. Finally, present it to the rest of the class.  
Discuss whether all the elements in the scene have been brought out. Whether it was well presented, whether the focus of the piece was recognized, the relations between the characters understood, the Status of each established. | resources needed and present it in front of an audience (Level 8)  
Explore different situations and present a scene to an audience making good use of space (Level 7)  
Perform in front of an audience with Status in mind (Level 6)  
Rehearse a scene and present it in front of an audience (Level 5) |