

PART 1: DRAMA IN THE CLASSROOM

Nikelle Ebert

Nikelle Ebert is an Australian and has worked as a NET at Christian Alliance Cheng Wing Gee College in Tai Wai since August 2002. She has been developing drama within the Oral English curriculum of the school for four years.

On Drama

Nikelle believes that being creative and confident with using English are very important. She uses a wide variety of drama techniques to develop these areas in the students that she teaches in both the lower and upper forms.



Featured Strategies:

- √ Classroom Management Strategies
- √ Rubric for Assessment of Student Performance

Why did you want to introduce drama in your school?

Drama is a useful teaching tool as it offers ways of practising reading, writing, speaking and listening in authentic contexts and provides students with the need to communicate. Since I had used drama effectively when teaching in Australia, I felt sure that drama would also be an effective teaching tool in my school in Hong Kong.

How did you go about introducing drama to the school?

The support of the Principal and the English Panel was very important. We all agreed that drama would benefit the students. We looked at where drama would fit into the curriculum and found that it complemented the Oral English programme. To begin, I tried to use drama in regular English lessons, but the teachers quickly realised that this was almost impossible due to space constraints. The students now have their drama sessions in a spacious dance and drama room, which makes it much easier to organise drama activities.



How do you maintain discipline in drama classes?

By keeping the students busy. There must be many fast-paced, constantly changing activities in each lesson to keep students engaged.



It is also important to create an environment with as few distractions as possible. For example, the students take off their shoes before entering the Drama Room so that they can move about quietly. They bring only a pen and notebook with them to the lesson to take notes and to do the writing tasks. Consequently, the students are not burdened with a lot of pieces of paper or materials which would distract them from the lesson.

With classes typically consisting of 40 to 42 students, it is important to be well-prepared for the lesson. Since there is no textbook to follow, I need to have the lesson plan well fixed in my mind. I know exactly what is going to happen

next. It is so important to be clear about the sequence of the lesson plan, especially when you have to move the students around the room which I often do in drama classes. Maintaining good classroom discipline is crucial to the success of a drama lesson. You have to be clear about what you want the students to do, and you have to be clear when giving instructions.



Also, drama lessons can become noisy at times. This is good as you want the students to communicate, but the teacher has to be able to control the class. I take a whistle to class with me. When I need to call the students to order, I blow the whistle sharply to let the students know they need to stop what they are doing and pay attention. It is a zero noise signal that is useful in a noisy drama classroom. Finally, I re-arrange the groups that students work in during the term so students don't see the class as an opportunity to socialise with their friends.

What about assessment?

Drama activities must be assessed in order for students to take them seriously. In Form 2, students are asked to present a short scene of my choice in a group of three as part of their oral examination. Before the assessment, the students will be trained in body language, voice projection and movement and doing group work. These are areas that will be assessed. Students are allowed to approach me for help with difficult words or ideas for the presentation. (The simple rubric for assessment is shown on p. 5.)

Besides using the rubric to assess their performance and to identify areas for improvement, the students will also receive oral feedback from me immediately afterward, so they get a general idea of how they performed.

How do other teachers know how the students are progressing?

Members of the English Panel and I regularly discuss student progress on a formal and informal basis. This discussion helps inform our teaching. At the end of each semester, teachers receive a copy of the drama assessment marks. The marks will contribute to the oral English and overall English grades.

Rubric for Assessing Performance in Drama

Assessment Criteria/ Score	Excellent 5	Good 4	Average 3	Below Average 2	Poor 1
1. Loud and clear voice					
2. Accuracy, fluency and intonation					
3. Use of eye contact and body language to promote communicative effectiveness					
4. Group collaboration					

How has drama benefited the students?

The most obvious change in the students is that they are less afraid to speak English. Around sixty percent of them will now speak to me in the corridor; Students are now more eager to ask questions and contribute in class.

Drama does not produce results overnight. Teachers should not expect immediate improvement in students' oral skills. However, over time, students' confidence in speaking English will grow, especially when they associate it with enjoyment and pleasure rather than with passing an exam.

Do you have any plans to further develop drama at school?

I would like to extend drama into Form 6. It will be helpful in preparing students for the A-Level exam and, of course, the new Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education. The purpose of the drama activities would not be to drill students for an examination, but to teach them to manipulate their voice, posture and to communicate for different purposes. I would also incorporate voice techniques that are commonly used in debating into drama lessons.

Comments from the Principal, Mr Kwok Kai Ming

We have been lucky that Nikelle is keen on implementing drama in the school. It is a good way to improve the students' speaking skills and confidence. The drama lessons in the lower forms are very helpful in preparing students for the NSS electives.

Comments from the English Panel Chair, Mrs Choi Lai Mei

The teaching of drama complements the work of the English Panel well and really helps the students strengthen their command of spoken English. The students enjoy drama very much!

Stephen Cooley

Stephen Cooley is originally from the USA and has worked as a NET in Hong Kong since 2000. He is the NET at Chinese YMCA College, a CMI school in Ma On Shan in the New Territories. He has used drama as a medium for teaching English for most of the time he has been a NET at the school.

On Drama

Stephen advocates drama as a good way to improve student confidence and speaking and listening skills. He uses drama in ways that will interest and involve the whole class.

Drama is a key element in the 'Creative Expression' classes which have replaced the old 'Oral English Communication' classes. He has found that dramatic performance of jazz chants is an excellent way for students to become attuned to the rhythm of the English language. They also develop performance skills. During the time that he has been using jazz chants and dramatic texts as a basis for Creative Expression classes, Stephen has co-operated closely and built good relationships with his colleagues on the English Panel.



Featured Strategies:

- ✓ Setting up a Drama Competition
- ✓ Creative Expression Lessons
- ✓ Jazz Chants

How do you use drama in the classroom?

The creation of a Creative Expression programme at the school has been positive for teachers and students. Teachers are less tied to the textbook. As a result, a school-based curriculum that is more aligned to the needs, abilities and interests of the students can be developed. The focus is on developing speaking and listening skills. The students no longer practice with static situational dialogues. They are involved in making presentations. They now see Creative Expression lessons as a chance to be creative and to enjoy speaking English rather than practicing English simply for the sake of having to do it!

The school has been flexible in deploying me to make the Creative Expression lessons work. I teach a range of classes and year groups. I work with each of the Form 1 and Form 2 classes for 5 consecutive cycles in the first term and prepare them for English Week in the second term. The students prepare small-scale dramatic presentations of fables and stories. I also see the Form 3, 4 and 5 students throughout the year and work with them on dramatic performances of more sophisticated poems, short stories and songs.

My colleagues are also involved in preparing the students and helping them to improve their presentation skills and pronunciation. I work with various classes to get them started and then their class teachers take over and guide the students through the preparation and rehearsal.

Old Man Yu and the Mountains performed by Form 2 students



The students especially enjoy practising for and competing in the Inter-class Drama Competition. It gives them something to aim for. To prepare for this competition, each Form 1 and 2 class receives a drama script at the beginning of September. In past years, I have used the scripts from Carolyn Graham's *Jazz Chant Fairytales*.



The scripts are ideal for the following reasons:

- They incorporate rhythm and rhyme.
- It is possible to involve classes of 40 or more students, since there are a lot of roles: narrators, actors and chorus. Everyone has a part to play.
- The more capable students play the role of the narrator/actor.
- The less confident students are in the chorus.
- Students are taught to link sounds together for better pronunciation.
- Most of the stories are already familiar to the students.

After choosing the scripts, the rehearsal process begins. It includes the following:

1. In Cycle 1, students read and listen to the scripts, and start thinking about who will take the narrating and acting roles.
2. In the next 4-5 cycles, students rehearse the scripts from beginning to end during Creative Expression classes. Narrators are required to read their lines smoothly. Actors and actresses must memorise their lines and learn to speak with feeling and for dramatic effect. The chorus also needs to be trained to speak loudly and clearly in unison, and with the right intonation. This rehearsal process continues throughout the first term.
3. At the end of the first term, a preliminary inter-class competition is held. Two or three English teachers are selected as judges. The judges visit each class once over a period of one cycle. Each class performs their drama for the judges. The narrators and actors perform at the front of the classroom while the chorus stays in their seats. The judges use a scoring rubric to assess each class on their English-speaking skills and the delivery of the piece. Feedback is given to each class.

4. After the judges have assessed each class, they choose two winners – one Form 1 and one Form 2 class. These two classes then perform their pieces on stage in the school hall during the English Week in February. The English teachers collaborate to prepare the winning classes for the big performance day. During this time, the students also work hard to prepare the props and costumes to enhance their performance.
5. THE BIG DAY – each drama piece typically lasts 10 to 15 minutes. On stage, the members of the chorus are arranged on the choir stands and hold large cards depicting the scenes. For a performance of *Rumpelstiltskin*, the cards had 'straw' drawn on one side and 'gold' drawn on the other side. When the chorus held up the 'straw' side, you could see a large pile of straw; when they flipped the cards over, the pile of straw instantly became a mound of gold. The actors perform in front of the chorus, often interacting with them. For example, if a student in the role of a messenger shouts, "The Queen, the Queen, where is the Queen?", everyone in the chorus then points to the Queen. The narrators stand at the front of the stage and off to one side. One narrator sometimes hits a tambourine to keep the chorus in rhythm. Some classes have used classical music and sound effects in the background to enhance the action on stage.

The Passionate Shepherd to His Love performed by Form 6 classes



What about dramatic activities with the older classes?

A similar process is followed with the Form 3 classes. The classes are given well-known children's poems for dramatisation. These short performances last 2 to 3 minutes each. There is no preliminary inter-class competition, but each class performs on stage during English Week after the Form 1 and 2 classes. In 2006-2007, the dramatised poems included *The Owl and the Pussycat* by Edward Lear, *Wynken, Blynken and Nod* by Eugene Field, *The Adventures of Isabel* by Ogden Nash and *Jim (who ran away from his nurse...)* by Hillaire Belloc.

The Form 4 and 6 classes dramatised more sophisticated poems during the English Week assembly for senior forms. In 2006-07, we selected excerpts from *The Bells* by Edgar Allan Poe for the Form 4 classes. For the Form 6 classes, we chose *The Passionate Shepherd to His Love* by Christopher Marlowe and *The Nymph's Reply* by Sir Walter Raleigh. These pieces were challenging for our students, but their performances were creative and entertaining.

How do you get the students started with jazz chants?

Since I am in the fourth year of using jazz chants as the basis for Creative Expression lessons, I decided to develop my own jazz chant scripts in the style of Carolyn Graham's *Jazz Chant Fairytales*. I wrote these mostly in the post-examination period and based them on the traditional Chinese tales that I had found on the Internet. In the performance of *The Frog in the Well*, two students mimed the actions of the main characters, the Frog and the Turtle, while their classmates read out the words. The front line of the chorus sat on stage in a semi-circle and held up large cards to create the setting of a well.

First, I let the students listen to the jazz chant from beginning to end while reading the script. Carolyn Graham's *Jazz Chant Fairytales* are quite long, but the stories are familiar and the text is illustrated. Most students can follow them. It may be necessary to explain some words and phrases, but this should be done after the students have listened to the entire script once.

The next step is to do a class reading of the script from beginning to end. I usually ask all the students to read every part the first time through. They repeat the lines after me, focusing on rhythm and intonation. I snap my fingers to keep them in rhythm. Sometimes, I will have to go over a certain line a few times before the students catch on. Often, I have to teach students explicitly the way to link the sounds of the words together so that they can keep the rhythm without dropping their final consonants. This makes them more aware of the letter-enunciation relationships that they have learned in phonics lessons. It also helps them to improve their pronunciation.

It may take more than one lesson to listen to and read through the entire script with the whole class this way. When that's done, I select the more capable students to play the parts of the narrators and actors. The rest of the class will then be assigned to the chorus. Everybody has a part to play. When I call the narrators and actors to the front of the classroom to act out their parts, the story begins to take on a life of its own. This is the part that the students enjoy the most.

[Two jazz chant scripts by Stephen Cooley, *The Frog in the Well* and *Old Man Yu and the Mountains*, are included in the Resources-for-Drama section of this publication. Stephen recommends these scripts for Form 1, 2 and 3 students.]

Bill Henderson

Bill Henderson has been the NET at St. Francis of Assisi's College, a school in Fanling in the New Territories, for three years. The medium of instruction in the school is Chinese. He is an experienced drama teacher and his deployment is a good example of how a school has enabled a NET to use his particular skills to enhance language acquisition.

Since his arrival, Bill has raised the profile of Drama within the school. The school has found that using drama to teach English is an effective way of dealing with learner diversity.



Featured Strategies:

- √ Improvisation
- √ Co-teaching with Drama

Bill believes that learning English should be an enjoyable and pleasurable experience for students. At his school, the students experience drama in and out of the classroom. Drama does not necessarily mean staging a play or making students perform in public. In Form 1, drama games are used to:

- develop listening skills; and
- practise tenses and phonics.

The students also:

- act out jazz chants;
- dramatise poems; and
- perform scripted plays.

The students are asked to consider the visual aspect of these activities like a photographer would frame a scene. These activities are part of their Oral Assessment.

How does drama help to develop English language skills?

In Forms 2-6, students develop their self-expression by participating in a wide range of activities such as:

- improvising on a given theme; and
- acting out simple scenes from different movie genres to complement the study of film.

These activities also develop students' social skills and self-confidence. This development has been noticed by many teachers.

How important is the involvement of the English Panel?

The support of the Principal and the English Panel has been crucial in establishing a drama-friendly environment in the school. Being mindful of the imminent implementation of the NSS curriculum, the English Panel supports innovative and creative approaches to language teaching. This has resulted in a more student-centred teaching paradigm.

English Panel Members attended two professional development workshops in which I have demonstrated ways to use drama for maximising student engagement.. They co-teach in drama lessons. Since it is difficult to conduct drama activities in large classes, they share the teaching with me in split class settings.

Recently, the students have begun to win more prizes in the Hong Kong Speech Festival. This has helped legitimise the presence and place of drama at the school. Although some teachers still say that it is very hard to teach English in a CMI school, they believe that drama allows students to learn and practise English in a less intimidating context.

What has been the response of the parents to the dramatic activities?

Some parents consider drama a hobby only. Other parents see the impact drama has had on their children's improvement in English. The latter group of parents has noticed marked improvements in behaviour at home, self-esteem and expressiveness after they have taken part in drama.

Bill Henderson coordinating drama activities for students and teachers



What future plans do you have for drama?

I will work with members of the English Panel on developing expertise in drama and on better preparing students for the 'Learning English through Drama' elective in the New Senior Secondary curriculum. Since introducing drama into the school has so satisfying personally and professionally, I will see to it the drama program continues to grow, albeit slowly.





Lisa Gyokery

Lisa Gyokery is originally from Canada and has taught Drama and English in Canada, Australia and Hong Kong for fifteen years. She has worked as a NET in Tsuen Wan Government Secondary School since 2002. Drama is part of the repertoire of teaching strategies that she uses both in the classroom and in extra-curricular activities. Lisa particularly enjoys teaching drama to lower form students as she finds them particularly responsive and enthusiastic.

On Drama

Although Lisa agrees that using drama can be risky and that many teachers worry about looking undignified, she believes that using drama can be highly beneficial for both students and teachers. She also believes that through drama, teachers and students can understand each other better and language learning can be enhanced.



Featured Strategies

- √ Warm-up Games (Also in Resources for Drama Section)
- √ Exercises for Voice Lessons
- √ Assessment Strategy

Why are warm-up games important?

Warm-up games are important because they help to energise students and also help focus and prepare them for upcoming tasks. Students love them because there is a lot of interaction and play. The games mentally and physically prepare them for drama. The students get excited when they play warm-up games and are eager to progress to the next part of the lesson.

(See the Resources-for-Drama section, pp. 89-94, for the warm-up games contributed by Lisa.)

How do you facilitate student participation?

The students know that participation is part of their mark and most do not want to risk getting low marks. If they don't participate, then I may approach them individually and try to overcome their reluctance by repeating or explaining using myself as an example and by making them see that the activity is not that difficult. I try to give them a lot of positive reinforcement.

To start, I will do some breathing exercises. That helps them to understand the importance of taking a good breath before projecting their voice. Some students are uncomfortable with this activity because it is new to them and they feel vulnerable. However, when they manage to do it, they feel a sense of achievement.

Following the breathing exercises, I teach the main points of voice:

- Pace
- Pause
- Pitch
- Volume

I often use counting exercises to help the students develop these aspects of their voices.

Pace: count from 1-10 very fast and also very slowly.

Pause: students repeat the following after me: 1, 2, 3 (pause), 4 (pause), 5, 6 (pause), 7, 8, 9 (pause), 10.

Pitch: Students count from 1 to 10 in high and low pitched voices. Then I ask the boys to count in a high-pitched voice. I ask the girls to count in a low-pitched voice. Learning about pitch takes practice. The students just need to keep practicing and discovering how their voice works.

Volume: Students copy me as I raise my voice louder and louder. Then, I get them to count from 1 to 10, with 1 being very soft and 10 being very loud. Also, I ask the students to imagine being angry and speak 'angrily' to their partners. That usually means speaking in a loud voice. Alternatively, I ask pairs of students to stand at opposite ends of the room and shout the lines that they have been working on to their partners. I emphasise that students must keep breathing properly. Without proper breathing, their voices will be too soft .

How do you get students to respond 'dramatically' in oral classes?

Drama begins with self-confidence and the willingness to participate and co-operate with others. I do a lot of trust games so students feel comfortable working with each other. In Form 1, the students are not asked to perform on their own because doing so is very intimidating for them. I work side-by-side with them if they are scared or I give them ideas and then step back and let them try. When they can do it, I will always tell them how pleased I am.

Younger students learn to be 'dramatic' by following my lead. I show them how to mime and be funny or explain how a tableau should look if they do it well. I train students by having them come up to the front of the room and help me form a tableau or to show a mime. The teacher must be confident or the students may not understand or want to participate. I am not afraid of looking a little silly, if it helps students to understand that if their teacher can do it, so can they.

Is it more difficult for younger students in Form 1 and 2 to do Drama?

Form 1 students have so much energy and are so keen on doing drama. Dramatic activities, such as mime, tableau or performing a Halloween poem, are fun for them. They are less self-conscious and more willing to take risks. However, as students grow, they become very self-conscious, especially those in Form 3. Some become afraid of making mistakes or of losing face in front of their peers, so reassurance and praise is especially important for older students.

How do you assess drama?

Before the 2006-07 school year, the total mark of the Form 1 Oral English exam consisted of two components:

- Reading Aloud - reading one of the passages from the English textbook, and
- Storytelling - telling a story based on a given picture.

Students could get up to 10 marks in each component for a total of 20 marks.

In 2006-07, the Form 1 final mark of the Oral English exam was a combination of the results in Reading Aloud and the Drama marks. The breakdown of the final mark is as follows:

Term 1:

Drama Mark: Collected work in the Drama File, performance of the Halloween Poem and general participation in class: 10 marks
(The drama files are clear folders that contain the students' written work and teacher-prepared handouts. The students are also required to make a 'Drama Collage' on the front of the folder to illustrate what drama means to them.)

Reading Aloud: 10 marks

Term 2:

Drama Mark: Tableau, mime and voice activities (10 marks)

Reading Aloud: 10 marks

Students are usually awarded a mark between 4 and 10 for their work in drama. A '4' indicates very little effort while a '9' indicates an impressive and original performance.

How do you manage doing drama with large classes?

It is very difficult to do drama with large classes of second-language learners. Twenty is a reasonable size. For this reason, students are divided into groups of twenty. I take 20 students out of regular English class for a two-period drama lesson – a total of 70 minutes. The other twenty students will have Reading lessons or enrichment activities with the regular English teacher. The groups alternate each cycle so that everyone gets a chance to do drama. This system works well.

A large area uncluttered by furniture is best for doing drama. We use our Student Activity Centre, a huge room with a lot of space. The Student Activity Centre is situated in a part of the school that has no classes. Students can be noisy without disturbing other classes. I have conducted lessons in the library and sometimes on stage. Doing drama in a classroom where other classes are nearby is not a good idea.

I have never had problems with student behaviour. A teacher should be confident and sure about using drama techniques. I firmly believe that this confidence will be communicated to

the students. I must say that the students love drama so much that they are almost always well-behaved. Occasionally, they are a bit naughty. The threat of stopping the drama activities to do written work is usually enough to get them back on task.

Your school seems to be drama-friendly. Is this something you had to work hard to achieve?

My school embraces drama because we all agree that it is good for our students. It helps them to become more well-rounded. The introduction of the NSS electives was also an important factor in establishing drama within the English curriculum in the lower forms. More exposure to English drama that is delivered by a trained teacher is important for the younger students. They can have a ‘taste’ of drama before exploring it in depth starting in Form 4. I help nurture the self-confidence of the younger students just as much as I teach them drama skills.

Do you also use drama in extra-curricular activities?

In 2006-07, the English Society organised the ‘English Replay’ competition which is based on the popular Japanese television series ‘Queen of the Class’. Students were asked to adapt their own scripts and collaborate with a student production team to give performances at the Inter-House English Drama Competition.

I was asked by the Principal to help train the winner of this competition for the Association of EMI Schools ‘Drama Fest’ 2007. I re-wrote the script and re-cast it. By the time the revised script was ready and a new cast selected, we had less than a month to rehearse.

I helped the students with their pronunciation, intonation and movement. The director and the scriptwriter were at all the rehearsals. They helped organise the other students and keep them on task. They made it much easier for me to work with everyone. Although putting on a production requires a great deal of work, it is truly satisfying. Along the way, you get to see the students develop their language and acting skills in rehearsals.

Ceara McManus

Ceara McManus has been the NET at CCC Yenching College since 2004. Before coming to Hong Kong, she taught in English language schools around the world, including Italy, Serbia, the UK and Australia. Ceara received her TESOL training in 1997 and 1998. Before that, she taught Drama and French at a secondary school in Brisbane, Australia. Her passion for teaching languages and dramatic art have been guiding her in developing the programme at Yenching College since 2004.



Yenching College is a CMI school in Tsing Yi. Ceara teaches a programme to stronger Forms 1, 2 and 3 students that is comprised of one period a week (35 minutes) enrichment classes. The goals of the program are to make learning English fun and to expose the students to a wide array of ways of learning English.

In the 2007-08 academic year, this language arts-focused programme will target the junior secondary forms in oral lessons conducted by the NET. Drama will be an important tool for developing students' English language skills.



Featured Strategy:

√ Differentiated Drama Activities for Junior Form Students

Why do you use drama in the English classroom?

Drama offers a wide range of language learning opportunities for students. I use a combination of scripted, unscripted and student-written plays in class.

Scripted plays save time as the students need not spend time writing them. From a language teaching point of view, scripted dramas expose students to accurate English in meaningful contexts. With such plays, teachers can teach pronunciation and give students the chance to build self-confidence by practising speaking skills. An area that has become very important is intonation. It is assessed in the Hong Kong public exams but rarely taught. A scripted play is a good tool for practising intonation.



Unscripted plays. Sometimes, the students are not allowed to use a written script when they are performing a short role-play. The purpose is to enable them to internalise the language. The topics of the plays and tasks are familiar to the students. For example, they may interview each other about their favourite things or act as waiters and customers taking orders at a restaurant.

Student-devised plays are original plays written by the students. The students draft and revise their creations until they are satisfied with the finished products. They have to focus on grammatical accuracy, as well as meaning.

Is performance necessary?

Teaching with drama is unique in that it focuses on the process as well as the product. Students learn and develop along the way. As a language teacher, I try to vary the products that the students work toward so that they can progress in a variety of ways. Their parents and the school administrators will then be able to appreciate the students' talents and abilities.

The drama tasks that the students undertake vary according to the year group.

S1: For shy students and beginners, I start with in-class performances of scripted and radio plays. These radio plays, and even advertisements, can then be played on the school English radio station.



S2: Now that they have had some experience of drama, the students are ready to write their own TV shows and films. Recordings of these are shown at an assembly during English Week.

S3: By now, the students are ready to show their drama skills. I like to take them to a local primary school to perform. P1 students are not usually intimidating. In fact, they make for a very enthusiastic and appreciative audience.

S4: Finally, in Form 4, students present original plays that are based on the books they have read for SBA (School-Based Assessment). In teams of 4, the students write and perform their plays in school uniform. Only one prop or costume item is allowed. My students have to write about the character that they play and explain the choice of prop or costume in the SBA journal.

Some groups make PowerPoint presentations, news reports or mini-plays. The students have to comprehend the stories they have read, discuss them and know about the fictional characters or the lives of the real people in the stories. When it is time to participate in the SBA, the students are much more familiar with the books and are more confident in discussing them in English.

Form 3 students performing *Possum Magic* for Primary 1 students



How do you manage large classes when doing drama?

Many believe that 40 students is too big a group for doing drama activities. I agree to a certain extent. If, for example, you want to play drama games, such as charades, then with a group of 40, many students will not be able to participate. However, if the task is to role-play or dramatise scripts, then drama work can be done effectively even if the group is large. The number helps to create an energetic learning environment. With careful planning and support, excellent learning and interesting language use can occur.

Details of the programme

The use of drama within the English curriculum is as follows:

Form 1 - Term 1	Form 1 - Term 2
<p>The students perform a simple scripted drama adapted from <i>A Christmas Carol</i> by Charles Dickens. The focus is on speaking loudly and clearly.</p>	<p>Students complete a term-long project which involves creating a product and making a brochure to advertise it. Depending on student ability, this can be a radio advertisement or an advertisement for TV. They should be recorded and watched or played back in class to give feedback on clarity and intonation before the final performances.</p>
Form 2 - Term 1	Form 2 - Term 2
<p>At the beginning of Form 2, students learn about movies and idols. They are asked to create a TV talk show in which they interview each other about their favourite TV shows, films, books, CDs, computer games and so on. Interviews can be carried out in groups or pairs. If you can find a quiet room with a sofa, the setting will make the interviews feel authentic, or you can have students conduct interviews in the playground.</p>	<p>The Term 2 project is based on fairy tales. The final product is the Fairy Tale News. In groups of 4 or 5, students choose a tale to turn into a news story. It has an anchor-person introducing the story and reporters and witnesses on location. A team-teacher or TA is usually needed to assist with the recording around the school. The final recording can be watched in class for intonation, pronunciation and voice training.</p>
Form 3 - Term 1	Form 3 - Term 2
<p>The focus is on making presentations of a book set in a city. In the presentations, the city itself is featured.</p>	<p>In Term 2, a children's story is adapted into a play to be performed for P1 students. <i>Possum Magic</i> was developed into a story-telling puppet show and <i>My Friends</i> was incorporated into an activity day. The Form 3 students wanted to help the P1 children learn English, so they also designed a series of word-searches and matching games based on the animals in the <i>Possum Magic</i> book.</p>