



INNOVATIVE LEARNING TOOLKIT

PROJECT TITLE: Theatre and Drama

Tags; drama, storytelling, schools

Teaching through drama and role playing, and telling stories through the characters in a play can be a very effective learning technique, especially when the audience has created the story themselves. Theatre can also be used to positively disrupt assumptions and habits of mind and create surprise, fun and excitement when incorporated into other events and processes.

EXAMPLES AND CASE STUDIES

Project Twin Streams

[Flanshaw Road Primary School](#) children created an art project and a book, inspired by the local stream. Based on this work, the school then put together a play involving the entire school.

Other regional, national and international examples

Educational theatre

Kids 4 Drama, based in Auckland, provides after school and in-school drama classes and productions, and uses theatre for education. Some examples of their productions are The Great Drain Game, Tina and Tane: Water Quality, Don't Trash It Stash It. Their material is designed to encourage children to think critically, solve problems and examine values, and often has curriculum supporting resources and follow up material tied to the workshop based formats. Waste Blast, a new production, has been created in partnership with Keep Waitakere Beautiful Trust. For more information see: <http://www.kids4drama.co.nz/>



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Australian Vox Theatre Company, part of Vox Bandicoot (a sustainability education collective) produce a number of different products, one of which is an arm dedicated to educational theatre. Excerpt from website: Vox Bandicoot have performed theatre pieces to at least 200 thousand people and performed to

at least 200 thousand more as roving characters during festivals. Vox Bandicoot have developed 12 primary pieces of work including pieces such as The Last Shower, Circus Sustainable and Sideshow Sustainable. <http://www.voxbandicoot.com.au/theatre.html>

Another example of the use of drama, imagination and fantasy for fun, hands-on learning experiences for children is the [Institute for Earth Education](#).

Community theatre

Sometimes theatre can be used to bring groups together to connect, discover new aspects of themselves, and get in touch with deeper collective meaning. One organisation, Cynefin <http://www.cynefin.org.uk/cynefin.htm>, the Sensory Labyrinth Community Theatre company engages in a kind of theatre which employs all the senses and which is performed in purpose-built labyrinths with and for communities. They create labyrinths either as installations in large rooms from wire, scaffolding and black cloth or they create them in the landscape and perform at night. The process of creating, and also participating in the eventual labyrinth walking experience is all collectively generated, and often brings groups together in new ways, learning new information about themselves as individuals, and their local environment.

[Welfare State](#), was a wonderful collective of engineers, musicians, sculptors, performers, poets and pyrotechnicians. They invented and developed site-specific theatre in landscape, lantern processions, spectacular fireshows, community carnivals and participatory festivals. Their community focused work has been inspirational around the world in showing how social and aesthetic principles can work together, and it is well worth looking through their [project pages](#) for inspiration.



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Guerilla theatre, and theatre as activism

[Guerilla theatre](#) is a particular kind of site specific theatre that is aimed at drawing attention to particular political or social issues. It is often disruptive in nature, and designed to blur the boundary between stage and audience, participant and actor, performance versus 'real life'. It is also related to arts activism,

Where installations are set up to put forward particular points of view, or further a particular issue or stand. This article has some tips for [site specific theatre](#).

Another take on this relates to the [Mayor of Bogota](#), Columbia who uses dramatic techniques to communicate with and engage his community.

IDEA INCUBATOR

Using ideas from guerilla theatre to create roving role plays and surprise performances as part of the planting days would be an interesting first step. It would be an interesting way of marketing PTS in different places, but also a fun and different form of education if it was tied to key environmental messages.

Parades, and unusual social theatre events with stream and water based messages could be an interesting alternative to public art projects or could include [planting](#) as part of the whole installation or theatrical process. They could be incredibly innovative if they bring together very different groups of people than would normally participate eg opera singers, engineers, textile artists and alternative theatre troupes.