

1“Where the Wild Things Are”

A process drama

Process Drama Created by David Dynak



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- o **Introduction:** No words, simple waves, bigger, back and forth
 - o **Pantomime.** Find wolf suit in the house (side coach: is it in a box, hidden under, high, low, heavy, dusty, over, around, etc.)
 - o **Narrative pantomiming:** Shake it out and put it on
 - o **Pantomime:** I am going to put on music and I want you to make mischief like Max (but make it in slow motion, remember slower and bigger)
 - o **Hot seating:** 3 people be Max’s mom and the rest will interview Max’s mom (hot seating, helps students understand characters)
 - o **Place:** Transform from Max’s room to a forest. I’m going to put on music and start high or low positions like things in a bedroom, then grow and freeze like a forest (divide class in half and take turns watching)
 - o **Sound scape:** We are painting a dream, close you eyes and save an image from a dream, just one image (ex: I’m falling). I’ll be the sound conductor, when I touch you say a few words or one word describing your dream image, say it every time I touch you.
 - o **Place:** Students create an ocean and a boat that sails across the ocean with Max in it with their bodies. The students may make ocean sounds when the boat passes by them and then they must be silent in their movement.
 - o **Gauntlet:** wild things facing each other in two lines with space between as an alley way for Max to walk. As Max walks down the alley the monsters roll their eyes, gnash their terrible teeth, growl, and maybe say something to Max for coming to their island. The monsters may only say something when Max passes them and may not touch Max. They go silent when Max turns and says, “silent!”
 - o **Tableau:** Max is made king. The students create a frozen picture of Max as king of the wild things. (You may have one student step out and play director to move the rest of the group into the perfect tableau for that scene)
 - o **Character action:** The wild rumpus. Everyone frozen in a beginning rumpus shape, Max yells “let the wild rumpus begin!” and the music and rumpus begins. When Max yells “stop!” the rumpus ends, music stops, and all freeze.
 - o **Role-playing:** Max sends the wild things off to bed. All wild things go off to bed following his command
 - o **Role-playing:** Max smells good things and decides he misses home. As Max walks by the wild things they try to make him stay but he says, “no!”
 - o **Place:** Ocean again. Max sails back home where his dinner is waiting and still hot.



Perceive and Reflect: What did you see? What did you like?

Using Process Drama in Book Previews

Agenda:

1. **Introduction.** Rachel Swenson, William Penn Elementary, Art Works for Kids Drama, Dance, and Visual Arts Specialist
2. **What is Drama?** Simply put, story telling. Whether it is telling through pretending to be a character from a story, writing about characters in a story and how they relate to one another, using a puppet and your hand to tell a story, telling a story without words and only your body and imagination, using spoken words to tell a story, sound effects, scenery, props, costume, movement, etc.
3. **What is Process Drama?** Using dramatic forms to tell a story with a large group of people involved in the telling of a story. Looking at setting, text/dialogue, character, plot, climax, beginning-middle-end of a story. Persons share and create characters, setting, images, and dialogue. The process is important and emphasized, not the end product/production of a story. Process drama is used in any classroom setting to involve all in the process of telling a story. No tryouts required, all are involved, and all are welcomed.

Process drama, takes anywhere from 5 minutes to 45 minutes. Depending on what process drama strategy you choose to use, how much of the story you want to tell, and how much time you have with your students. Process drama may be used to introduce the story, investigate a character, the setting, plot, etc.

4. Session attendees will experience process drama strategies using the following books:
 - *Chickens Aren't the Only Ones*, by Ruth Heller.
 - *The Magical, Mystical, Marvelous Coat*, by Catherine Ann Cullen.
 - *Snowmen at Night*, by Caralyn Buehner
 - *Coyote Steals the Blanket*, retold by Janet Stevens.
 - *Coolies*, by Yin, Illustrated by Chris Soentpiet
 - David Dynak's process dramas of the books, *Where the Wild Things Are*, by Maurice Sendak and *Rose Blanche*, by Roberto Innocenti

Any book can be chosen, the only limits are limits in creativity of the chooser. The more you use process drama, the more your creativity grows, and all forms of text have possibilities. A chapter book may be used, but it is best if a segment/chapter or part of a chapter is used, one scene, or just one/a few characters from the book.

5. There are several forms of story telling used in the structure of process drama. I like to call them process drama strategies. Here are several to get you started. Many more are listed in the book, "*Structuring Drama Work: A handbook of available forms in theatre and drama*," by Jonothan Neelands and Tony Goode
 - a. **Tableau:** Frozen action, a picture, book illustration, frozen time image.

- b. **Group sculpture:** An individual or members of the group model volunteers into a shape using as many members of the group and/or objects necessary, to reflect and encapsulate a particular aspect of the theme or issue under scrutiny.
- c. **Hot-seating:** Three seats are set out, and three individuals play the same character, the rest of the students question the character to get to know them better, their point of view, background, views on the other characters and/or problems in the story.
- d. **Creating a place:** With only bodies and movement, and sometimes sound, students create a setting (like a stormy ocean, a child's bedroom, etc.).
- e. **Gauntlet:** Two rows of people facing each other. Space between for someone to walk. As one character walks, the characters in the line do an action, speak a word, sentence, or phrase to the character walking by. There will be some overlapping of spoken words.
- f. **Conscience Alley:** Structured like a Gauntlet, but the group plays the character's thoughts, and voices are lower in volume. Word or phrase is spoken as the character passes by individuals in the group.
- g. **Soundscape:** Sound, song, words, and phrases, either pre-recorded or performed live, are used to create the mood and atmosphere of a character's lived experience. The group are encouraged to think of the Soundscape as having a musical shape to it and to weave the various words, statements and sounds together, orchestrating them as precisely as possible. Teacher may be the conductor or a student.
- h. **Dreamscape:** Like a Soundscape, but the sounds and words are focused on dream images, sounds, words, word phrases. Statements and sounds are orchestrated and will overlap at times. Teacher or one/two group members may orchestrate the Dreamscape.
- i. **Ceremony:** Groups devise special events to mark, commemorate or celebrate something of cultural/historical significance.
- j. **Narration:** This can be done in or out of the dramatic context. A way to provide a narrative link, atmosphere, initiate a drama, move the action on, create tension.
- k. **Pantomime:** Action and story telling without words. May be done in normal speed, slow motion, fast, and with one or more people.
- l. **Narrative Pantomime:** Teacher narrates a scene while the group pantomimes the action/story.
- m. **Action Narration:** A scene is performed with participants using narration to describe their actions around individual spoken lines of dialogue.
- n. **Choral Speak/Reading:** All speaking at the same time, the same words, with one voice.

- o. **Writing in role:** Diaries, Letters, Journals, Messages. These are written in or out of role as a means of reflecting on experience. Students write as if they were the character writing a letter, in a personal journal, and so on. This is thinking in role, drawing information from what has already been collectively assembled. Students use their personal knowledge and imaginations to create the world of the character. This is a way to experience stream of consciousness writing.
- p. **Guided tour/imagery:** A form of narration through which the group are provided with a detailed picture of the environment in which the drama is due to take place.
- q. **Teacher-in-Role:** Teacher takes on a role as part of the story for students to interact with them inside the drama.
- r. **Role on the Wall:** Students are writing on a paper outline figure of character first impressions and information they learn about the character as they discover the character in the story or play. Students are seeing that the better we know someone, the better we understand them, and they are seeing a character transformed.
- s. **Perceive and reflect:** Group discussion and share about what was seen, what was learned and what did we like.

*Remember, not all forms of drama need to be used for every story and the whole story doesn't have to be used either. Use what form will help you accomplish what you want, what form will help students comprehend a significant or difficult part in the text, and what form you have time allowance for. This is especially good to remember when previewing a book for students.

- 6. **What is comprehension?** Teaching that reading is an active process where we make meaning from what we read. Comprehension is meaning making from text. A brief overview of comprehension:
 - a. Using prior knowledge (bk-background knowledge)
 - b. Making connections (text to text, text to self, text to world)
 - c. Finding out the main ideas in text
 - d. Imagery, constructing mental images of the meaning conveyed by the text
 - e. Making inferences beyond the information given in text
 - f. Asking questions (about what is written, author's intentions, what will happen next, etc.)
 - g. Rereading for clarification and/or more meaning
- 7. **Process drama and Comprehension strategies are woven together:** Process drama is another way to tell a story, and comprehension is understanding the story/text that was read. Process drama allows students to make text-to-text, text-to-self, text-to-world connections. The dramatic forms invoke students in asking questions of the story and characters, relationships, setting. Students are constantly recalling the order of the story and information learned of characters thus far. The drama forms help students make meaning of the text they read or that is read to them.

All text is written to give information and/or tell a story. When using process drama in the classroom, you are not only making reading enjoyable for your students, but you are reinforcing students' meaning making from text. You can improve student meaning making by teaching them to use comprehension strategies used by good readers. These strategies are used throughout process drama. You can point out how strategies are used throughout process drama, enforcing the use of good reader strategies.

Process Drama Resources

Using Process Drama:

Structuring Drama Work: A handbook of available forms in theatre and drama, by Jonathan Neelands and Tony Goode
ISBN 0-521-78729-7

Music for Drama:

Contrast and Continuum; Music for Creative Dance, by Eric Chappell, volumes 1-4

Books we used today:

Chickens Aren't the Only Ones, by Ruth Heller
ISBN 0-698-11778-6
Grade level Kindergarten-2nd

Coolies, by Yin, Illustrated by Chris Soentpiet
ISBN 0-399-23227-3
Grade level 5th

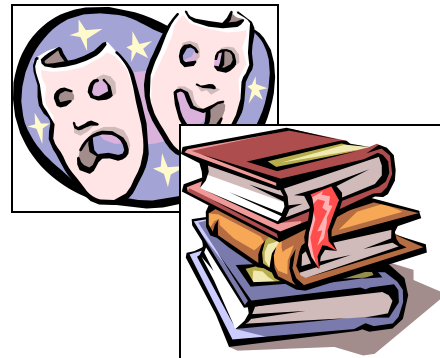
Coyote Steals the Blanket, retold by Janet Stevens
ISBN
Grade level 1st-4th grade

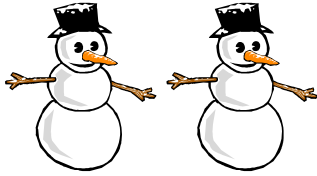
Rose Blanche, by Roberto Innocenti
ISBN 0-15-200918-3
Grade level 6th-adult

Snowmen at Night, by Caralyn Buehner
ISBN 0-8037-2550-7
Grade level Kindergarten-3rd

The Magical, Mystical, Marvelous Coat, by Catherine Ann Cullen
ISBN 0-316-16334-1
Grade level 1st-3rd

Where the Wild Things Are, by Maurice Sendak
ISBN 0060254920
Grade level kindergarten-6th grade





”*Snowmen at Night*“ by Caralyn Buehner

Process Drama Created Winter 2003 by Rachel Swenson,
Art Works for Kids Dance/Theatre Specialist
Knowlton Elementary, Farmington, Utah

Warm-up:

Visualization. Students lie on their backs and close their eyes. Have them picture a black screen in their heads.

“Light starts to come out of the blackness and you realize that you are at home. It is morning. You can tell because you are wearing your pajamas and the light shines like morning. You are the first to be awake and so you are all alone, it has been snowing all night long. You have awoken to a great treat. You peer out the nearest window (you can decide whether it is your front or backyard you are looking at). During the night it snowed 2 feet, 24 inches! The snow goes up past your knees. You will be the first to walk in the snow and are so excited, so you run to wear you keep your snow clothes. You pull on your snow pants, snow boots, sweater, coat, and put on your hat and mittens. You run to the nearest door that leads outside. (You decide what you will do first when you meet the snow: jump in it, kick it, throw it, roll in it, make a snowball, etc.) Do it. The snow is perfect for building a snowman. You begin packing a snowball and rolling it. What does your snowman look like that you are making. Open your eyes.”

Introduction:

Do you know what drama or theatre is? Drama is telling a story. You can tell the story with words, your facial expressions, emotion, movement, scenery, costume, and so on. Show the Snowmen storybook. Ask if the students can guess from the cover and title, who are the characters of the story. In this book the characters don’t speak but there is a lot of action. We will be using a lot pantomime (telling a story without words, just your body and facial expressions).

Activity:

o**Read** the story from the beginning to the page where the boy wonders what snowmen do at night and stop.

- **Building a snowman.** With a partner, pretend to build your partner (who is snow) into the snowman you envisioned when you visualized making one. Side coach students to remember details in making a snowman: rolling the snow into balls, packing the snow, smoothing the snow, adding details of the face and hands (our snowmen have arms out of the snow), what to use for clothing and eyes etc.,

for the face (so they don't touch each other's faces, have them make a facial expression and their snowman will copy it). Use music to start and stop the action of building the snowman. Students trudge through the snow to look at the other snowmen and then back to their own snowman. Then trade roles.

Or

Have students create their snowman character with their own body. (To save time)

- **Read** the story about what the snowmen do at night. Stopped after reading about sledding, just before the snowmen are tired and done.
- **Ice-skating.** Then show the ice-skating page, ask the students to describe the setting of this part of the story. Explain that we are going to create this setting in our classroom and give the perimeters of the pond. Have students go to the edge of the pond and freeze in their snowman character (the same shape their partner put them in). Use music to cue students to start and stop. Explain that you want different approaches to ice skating because we are different characters (scared skater, clumsy skater, graceful skater, duet skater, hockey skater, reckless skater, tricky skater, etc.). Explain that at ice skating rinks everyone on the outside skate in a circular way and in the middle they do axial things. Explain that they don't have to skate the whole time but can pretend to talk, watch ice skating, or drink ice cold cocoa from the side of the pond. Remember, no sounds/talking, all pantomiming.

Ice skating circle: Everyone skates to a circle and one at a time a skater does a trick in the middle of the circle. The rest of the group does silent cheers for them.

- **Snowball fight.** Snowball fight with our whole class being on the same team and playing against an invisible team of snowmen (so no fighting each other). Still pantomime. Slow motion showing ducking, throwing, making snowballs, getting hit, taking cover, etc. No music. I will yell "action" to start you and "cut" to stop you. If the students are doing well with this, practice starting and stopping them and having them try normal speed and then slow and so on.
- **Read** the rest of the book.
- **Hotseating.** Choose three students to sit on chairs and play the roles of snowmen. The rest of students get to play children interviewing the three caught at night snowmen. Questions like: How do you come to life? Why at night? Have you ever been caught? How have you kept it a secret for so long? What do you do in the spring? Who built you? How old are you? What else do you do at night? Etc.

Perceive and Reflect:

What is the beginning, middle, and end of the story? What did you see today? What was your favorite part of drama or the story today? Why?



“Coolies” process drama

Based on the book *Coolies* by Chris Soentpiet
Process Drama Created Spring 2003 by Rachel Swenson,
Art Works for Kids Dance/Theatre Specialist
Knowlton Elementary, Farmington, Utah

oImagery: Close your eyes and imagine if your family needed you to move far away and earn money for the family (no more school, no more meals made by mom or dad, and only a few personal things you can take on the trip).

oGauntlet: Some loved ones are leaving (4 students) and the rest make a gauntlet, as the leaving family/friends pass by the others say something they would if they were not to see them for a long time.

oHot seating: 3 or 4 people pretend to be Chinese men leaving for America. The rest interview them (Why are you going? What will you do when you get there? Are you nervous? Do you have family still in China? Etc.)

oExperience: daily life on a crowded ship, act out sleeping, eating, playing cards, walking, etc.

oTableau: Leaving the ship because you have arrived at America (side coach, are you tired and worn out, excited, nervous, scared, happy, trying to carry your heavy luggage, etc.) *Pull a student out to play director of the tableau and move students around to make the picture perfect.

oPantomime: half making fun of the Chinese and the other half as the Chinese worker. Reflect on feelings (even though the Chinese workers most likely did not speak English you can still tell when others are making fun of you and it doesn't feel good)

oSound Collage: Working on the railroad (hammer sounds or one word said sporadically as students work on the railroad (hammer, hit, clank, work, etc.)

oWrite: Students put themselves in role as a “Coolie” in America working on the railroad, they write a letter home to a friend or family member about how things are in America.

oDramatize: Students pretend to light dynamite, run for cover and hide, and react to the explosion (the tremble of the earth, impact)

oFreeze: In a frozen shape of how you would react or feel looking at the great trestle you just finished building.

oTableau: Angry Chinese workers want fair pay, foremen and Chinese protestors. ON the count of 8 Chinese workers chant, “Equal Pay! Equal Hours!”

oReenactment and sound effects: Divide class in half-half pantomime the Chinese workers working in a snowstorm and the other half creates the snowstorm sounds. Then switch groups.

oFinish reading the rest of the story.

oShare: Have students share ways their parents, grandparents, or they remember their ancestors and what their ancestors have done for their family.

o**Perceive and Reflect:** What did you see, what did you like?

“The Magical, Mystical, Marvelous Coat”

by Catherine Ann Cullen



A process drama

Process drama created by Rachel Swenson, Art Works for Kids Dance/Theatre Specialist
Knowlton Elementary, Farmington, Utah
Spring 2004

o**Pantomime** finding, and pantomime in slow motion putting on and buttoning the six buttons of your magical, marvelous coat. Then freeze in a position showing your coat is special, magical, mystical, and you love it.

Read the first few pages of “The Magical, Mystical, Marvelous Coat.” Read introducing the buttons and then stop.

o**Tableaus.** Divide students into 6 groups. Each group represents one of the six magical buttons. Have the students come up with individual frozen shapes representing their button (cold, warm, tune, star, stone, and doll). After the students have their shapes and can make their shape quickly. Have them choral say their buttons descriptor (cold, warm, tune, star, stone, and doll), as you narrate about the buttons in the book, the students jump up from a low crouched shape to their button shape and say their button word together.

Read the part about the girl giving the button to the giant and what happens.

o**Students in role** as giants. They must walk slowly, and very big, showing that their movement is heavy without making a sound. (Yellow Creative Movement CD track #1) Giant music is played and students move as if they were giants, keeping their own personal space, after 16 counts they freeze in a shape that shows they are uncomfortable because their head is too close to the sun. Two students, chosen before giant section started, skip through the frozen giants and pretend to give them a cold button. When the giant gets a cold button, they unfreeze, show their sense of relief and happiness, and then freeze again till the music stops (which means all giants were relieved of sun discomfort).

o**Choral speak.** All students jump up and chorally exclaim (while changing shape, facing, and gestures with each word), “What a magical, mystical, marvelous coat!”

Read the part about the girl giving the button to the swan and what happens.

- **Students in role.** Students now change characters to a swan frozen in the snow, under a tree. Two new students are chosen to be the little girl who gives the swan a button. Music is played (wooden slit log drum) and swans stay frozen until a galloping by girl pretends to give them a warm button. When the swan gets a warm button, they slowly thaw out/melt/stretch and slowly start to fly through the space. Music is played on drum softly till all swans are flying through the space.

o**Choral speak.** All students jump up and chorally exclaim (while changing shape, facing, and gestures with each word), “What a magical, mystical, marvelous coat!”

Read the part about the stormy ocean and the tune that calms it.

o**Creating the setting.** Students now create a stormy ocean (axial movement). The thunder tube is played and initiates the storm. Five students create a boat and two students are sailors in the boat (that are worried, etc.). The boat travels from one side of the room to the other. When the calm music (Yellow CD, entitled “Breathe”) is played, the ocean waters calm (slow, fluid, smooth, smaller movement of students) and the boat is saved, and the sailors are relieved.

o**Choral speak.** All students jump up and chorally exclaim (while changing shape, facing, and gestures with each word), “What a magical, mystical, marvelous coat!”

Read the part about the wizard and the star button.

o**Students in role.** Students become a sad, worn out wizard, and freeze. Two new students, play the child that side-slides and gives the star button to the wizard. When the wizard receives the button, their wand has its power back and they start casting wonderful spells and write in the air “What a magical, mystical, marvelous coat!” *(This also can be done with the teacher pretending to be the child and gives the wizards the button all at once)

Read the part about the snake and bunnies, and the stone button.

o**Tableau,** students in threes, twos, and fours create bunnies scared because of the snake and then relieved and happy when the stone is placed over the opening of their burrow.

Choral speak. On the count of three out of their tableau, they chorally say, “What a magical, mystical, marvelous coat!”

Read the part about the elf, and the doll button.

o**Students in role.** Elf music is played and the students pretend to do a happy elf dance with their imaginary doll friend. The dance starts when the music is played and freeze when the music stops (yellow cd, track #5 or #9).

o**Choral speak.** All students jump up and chorally exclaim (while changing shape, facing, and gestures with each word), “What a magical, mystical, marvelous coat!”

Read the part about the new friends visiting the child on Sunday.

o**Students in role.** Friend dance. All students. (Yellow cd, track #4 or #6)

o**Perceive and reflect.** *What were the beginning, middle, and end of the story? Etc.*



Chickens Aren't the Only Ones! Mammals vs. Non-mammals

Dance/Drama Lesson for 2nd Grade

Lesson Created by Rachel Swenson, Art Works for Kids Dance/Theatre Specialist, Knowlton Elementary, Farmington, Utah

Introduction: Dance qualities. Using visuals introduce the dance qualities of sustain, collapse, swing, and percussive.

Warm-up and Locomotor:

- Walk **16 counts** through the space
- Dance **sustained** movement **16 counts axial**
- Walk **16 counts** through the space
- Dance **sustained and collapse** movement **16 counts axial**
- Walk **16 counts** through the space
- Dance **swing** movement **16 counts axial**
- Walk **16 counts** through the space
- Dance **percussive** movement **16 counts axial**
- Walk **16 counts** through the space

Categorize: At the board, categorize various animals into two groups, mammals vs. non-mammals. Review characteristics/properties of mammals first. Use animal cards and students use non-verbal movement to show which category each animal belongs in. Point out that all of the non-mammals have in common something; they are Oviparous animals.

Read: “Chickens Aren't the Only Ones,” by Ruth Heller

Creative Dance:

oHave students **choose an Oviparous animal**, but keep it a secret.

oOnce all have chosen one, have the students find their own personal space and **create an egg like shape** (the egg shape should represent the animal's egg). From the book we learned that eggs come in many different sizes, shapes, and colors, so no egg shape should look like any other.

oAt the sound of the gourd shaker, **move percussively**, move a different body part each time, and change your shape slightly. Showing the **creature inside trying to break out of the egg**. Move at the same time as the shaker sound.

o8 counts. Using **sustained movement, stretch and push your way, axial in space**. Showing the freedom the creature is starting to gain from exiting the egg. Showing the creature stretching its body for the first time. Stretch, push, pull, and grow in different directions and levels.

oChange your shape percussively 3 times, showing **3 different shapes of your animal. Hold each shape 4 counts.**

oLocomotor your animal through the space till the music ends. You are just learning to travel through space so start with small slow movement that gradually grows bigger and faster as your animal is growing bigger and more confident as a mover. Travel using the levels of high, middle, and low in space (ex: Snakes slither on the ground, up trees, hang from trees, slither up over rocks, and coil up under rocks. Fish swim up to the top of the water meeting the sky and down to the sand at the bottom of the ocean. They travel in and out of coral reefs and seaweed. Spiders crawl up things to spin their web and along the ground under things and over things).

Perform: Half watch and half dance, vice versa. Audience members watch to see if the movement of the performers reminds them of any certain Oviparous animals. Audience also looks for dancers dancing with percussive, sustained, swing, or collapse dance qualities.

Perceive and Reflect: In a circle students and teachers share, “What did you see?” and “What did you like?”