

Identifying High Potential Learners in Drama

Summary

This advice sheet contains a checklist of criteria, originally compiled by the QCDA (Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency), to help with identifying high learning potential in Drama. It is aimed at secondary school subject teachers, as well as high learning potential lead teachers.

Below is a list of the characteristics commonly shown by learners who demonstrate high learning potential in drama. A learner need not be showing all of these to be considered a high potential learner, but would most likely be demonstrating a majority of them.

Learners who show high learning potential in drama have some of the following characteristics:

General

- respond to drama tasks easily
- suggest original, imaginative and creative approaches to tasks set
- look for different and unusual ways of working
- have a range of drama information - often intuitively - which they bring to the work
- be verbally fluent and perceptive with the work being created
- take the lead in group work and be comfortable as director and actor
- identify impact on the audience
- find solutions to drama based problems
- are adaptable and versatile
- empathise and understand how characters develop instinctively
- are usually (but not always) extroverts and happy to perform their work
- are highly motivated and expressive
- articulate ideas clearly and are happy to share these with others
- show leadership / directorial qualities
- show very good social skills and ability to work in groups
- are able to command presence on the stage as an individual performer (we are drawn to them from an audience viewpoint)(see X factor below)
- have good physical and vocal skills

Creative Flair/Dramatic Potential

- use imaginative and coherent speech
- have organisation skills and ideas that are exceptional for their age
- show a physical understanding of role and character above the normal level for their age
- bring highly imaginative and creative ideas to any / all group work or class exercise
- bring a developed drama knowledge and a sense of impact on the audience, exceptional for their age
- bring creative ideas linked to set, use of colour, costume, lighting and sound which shows exceptional knowledge and understanding
- show awareness of the dramatic potential - is it serious/ comic or another style / genre?
- have an ability to create and develop characters often through spontaneous improvisation

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Stamina and Perseverance

- use time given to produce work which is substantial and obviously the product of dramatically creative thinking and well directed effort
- often take part in extra – curricular performance / production work which needs time, commitment and understanding
- listen and appreciate directorial views from teachers and peers, to bring work to a high level
- undertake appropriate and advanced levels of work to show their understanding of role / character / situation or play / devised group work
- have their own high standards of what the work should be like and will undertake what is necessary to achieve it

Communication Skills

- has strong understanding of how to impact on the audience
- can communicate this to a group / cast with developed reasoning to support suggestions
- can keep and involve an audience by the use of developed characterisation or drama skills and techniques (which may or may not have been previously taught) · takes on guiding / directorial organisation role in classwork to achieve the group goal
- shows high level of sensitivity to both work being developed and others in the group
- may either produce written ideas or verbal ideas which show highly developed expression – this can be physical / emotional or verbal
- understands and uses a range of styles and is able to adapt and develop these as needed
- is able to appreciate and perform with an audience point of view in mind and is highly aware of the impact the work will have on the audience
- can use ICT where appropriate in new and innovative ways are able to look to multi – media / sensory work in theatre and appreciate this

Ability to Take on Demanding Tasks

- able and willing to research beyond task set , aiming to further develop understanding and appreciation
- able to appreciate unusual styles of theatre gaining awareness of what has been seen and appreciated and able to select from material seen and inform own work
- able to see the dramatic potential of the work and take this forward in imaginative , innovative and creative ways with little direction from teacher or a very open stimulus / tasks
- able to produce work which is significantly 'different' from work associated with their peer group / age
- able to make suggestions linked to the work in hand which demonstrate innovative ideas even if the means to create these are unknown
- will consider / give ideas for technical areas even where their expertise may be limited

Arguing and Reasoning for Performance

- creating and using reasoned arguments which can develop the work creatively and imaginatively
- looking for methods to clearly make the work original and different and being able to see this through logically and within the rehearsal process

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The X Factor

It is also true to note that with drama there is often a 'something' which is impossible to define which separates those talented in drama to those who simply work very hard and acquire the skills needed. These individuals are simply those to whom drama is a 'life blood' and to whom we are naturally drawn when they perform on stage, they show / have the X factor !

Further Information

<http://www.subjectassociations.org.uk/ps/samples/PS2%20Drama.pdf>

Guide to supporting high potential learners in Drama.

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