Process Drama Creation
Activity Plan Guide

This guide works with the 5-part ‘Process Drama Creation’ series. The guide summarizes each video, offers scripts to two full-length process dramas, and provides prompts and space for educators to reflect on how they can use process dramas in their work.

Prepared by Meghan Grover in collaboration with Zeynep Akca Malbrough, Courtney McClellan, and Caitlin Wees.
Acknowledgements:

We have built this series from the learning of many Applied Theatre practitioners, including Chris Vine at the CUNY School of Professional Studies, Helen Wheelock at the Creative Arts Team (CAT), students of the CUNY MA Applied Theatre Program, and more.

Many of the conventions listed in this guide are from the book, *Structuring Drama Work: 100 Key Conventions for Theatre and Drama*, by Jonothan Neelands and Tony Goode.
## Process Drama CREATION

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements:</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Video 1: Introduction to Process Dramas</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video 1 Prompt</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Video 2: Process Drama Brainstorm &amp; Ethics</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 1: Brainstorm Prompts</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 2: Ethics Prompts</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Video 3: Dramatic Conventions from “A New World,” a Process Drama for high school and undergraduate students</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video 3 Prompts</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Video 4: Dramatic Conventions from “Frog and Mouse,” a Process Drama for early childhood students</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video 4 Prompts</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Video 5: Reflective Activities</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video 5 Prompts</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appendix 1: Script of ‘A New World’</strong></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 1 (45-60 minutes)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallery Walk</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher in Role</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene &amp; “Overheard Conversations”</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forum Theater and Simultaneous Dramaturgy</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 2 (45-60 minutes)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role on a Desk</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role on the Wall</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 3 (45-60 minutes)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting Students into role</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot Seating and Problematizing</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commission</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De-roling</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 4: Reflection (45-60 minutes)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetic Reflection</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appendix 2: Script of ‘Frog and Mouse’</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 1 (30-45 minutes)</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ritual/Opening Song  
Role in a Bag  
Transitioning into Role: Teacher and Students  
Transitioning into the world  
World Building  
De-roling  

Day 2 (30-45 minutes)  
Ritual/Opening Song  
Transitioning into Role and World  
Diaries, letters, journals, messages  
World Building  
Problematizing  
De-roling  
Still Image & Thought-Tracking  

Day 3 (30-45 minutes)  
Ritual/Opening Song:  
Transitioning into Role and World  
World Building  
Picture Reflection  
De-roling  

Day 4 (30-45 minutes)  
Check-in  
Transitioning into Role and World  
Problematizing  
Forum Theater and Simultaneous Dramaturgy  
De-roling  
Reflection
# Video 1: Introduction to Process Dramas

*Empire State Creates: Teaching Artist-Led Activities for Everyone*

**Project Title:** Process Drama Creation  
**Age(s):** Educators  
**Time:** 3 minutes  
**Arts Discipline:** Applied Theatre

## ACTIVITY AT A GLANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal(s):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Learn structure of this video series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Gain general understanding of Process Dramas and dramatic conventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Materials:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● This Activity Plan Guidebook (questions for this video on p. 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Pen or pencil for notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Word(s)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Process Drama</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## STEPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step #1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Watch the video with introduction to Process Dramas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Write down any notes and response to the prompt, if that’s helpful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What are Process Dramas?

- Process Dramas use a series of dramatic conventions to immerse people in a story and problem. Students have power and can change the story.
- The educator creates structures within which the students are free to express their ideas and perspectives.
- The emphasis is on the process of collective and individual decision making.
- Because Process Dramas often create fictional worlds, students can “try on” other roles and ideas which depart from their own, offering a multitude of opportunities for building empathy, investigating new perspectives, and applying the circumstances to the real world.
- Some people say this is like Dungeons and Dragons or like a murder mystery party.
- No matter what your student population is, Process Drama and dramatic conventions can offer students opportunities to practice critical thinking and decision making skills, and imagine new ways of being in community in a fun, imaginative environment.

Video 1 Prompt

Why might you incorporate Process Drama or dramatic conventions into your classroom? What feels exciting for you?
Video 2: Process Drama Brainstorm & Ethics
Empire State Creates: Teaching Artist-Led Activities for Everyone

Project Title: Process Drama Creation  Age(s):  Educators
Time: 8 minutes  Arts Discipline: Applied Theatre

ACTIVITY AT A GLANCE

Goal(s):
- Brainstorm possibilities for Process Dramas in your classroom, looking at theme, central question, and your own interests & passions
- Explore the ethics of creating Process Dramas

Materials:
- This Activity Plan Guidebook (questions for this video on p. 8)
- Writing utensil

New Word(s)
- Theme
- Central Question
- Aesthetic Distance

STEPS

Step #1
- Watch Video Two: Process Drama Brainstorm and Ethics

Step #2
- Respond to the questions in this guidebook to explore what kind of Process Dramas you might want to implement in your classroom and what ethics you are considering
Part 1: Brainstorm Prompts

1. **Theme**: A theme describes the overarching ideas that we are exploring. For example, in the Process Drama ‘Frog and Mouse’ for early childhood students, the themes are friendship, conflict negotiation, and self-expression. What kinds of themes would you like to explore in your classroom?

2. **Central Question**: A central question can be a lot of things - for us, a central question is what our drama explores that we as the creators do not have a simple or singular answer to. Because a Process Drama navigates societal behavior, there is not only one outcome. Throughout each part of a Process Drama, the students collectively explore the central question. For example, our central question for ‘A New World,’ was “What do we do when a person, a community, or a government causes harm?” What questions might you want to explore with your students?
3. **What excites you as an educator?** You need to feel passionate about this too. Using your themes and questions, what source or story might engage your students in investigation and imagination? Is there a historical event you’d want to explore with your students? Is there an inspiring activist you want them to learn about? Are there fairy tales that relate to our modern world that could open up themes? What novels, art-pieces, music, poetry, and comics could you use?

### Part 2: Prompts about Ethics

These are the questions and discoveries that we consider when we create Process Dramas. Note that these are things that we focus on as collaborators. You may have other things that you are focusing on. We offer this as a starting point for questions. Also, these ideas are always in *draft* and changing. These are our principles at this moment and we are continuing to develop them.

1. As you devise Process Dramas, aiming to create as diverse a team as possible will help your drama contain multiple perspectives and life experiences.
   a. You will also be better prepared as a creative team to support the multiple reactions of the students. The more diverse your team, the more equipped they are to support challenging moments in the room (should they arise).
2. Connect your drama to the students’ experiences. Some questions you might consider before creating your drama are: What world do your students envision for themselves? What kind of
fictional worlds could enable them to practice real-world decision making and experience realistic consequences with guided facilitation?

3. How can you support various learning styles? Mixing media can offer students different ways into the Process Drama. For example, voice memos, letter-writing, photography, music, dances, TikTok videos, Instagram, and more can all be a part of your drama.

4. In a Process Drama we are aiming to create aesthetic distance. Applied Theatre practitioner Anthony Jackson writes that aesthetic distance creates space between the reality of the participants and the drama to make sure the experience is clearly fictional and not the re-enactment of their experiences.
   a. For example, if we wanted to look at labor rights as a theme, we would not use the recent Amazon warehouse strike- because we are just too close to it in this moment. But we might go back in time to the 1920s and use the Railroad Shop Workers Strike as the inspiration for our drama.
   b. Aesthetic distance allows students to experience the content of the drama without being directly impacted by the immediacy of the story.

5. Prepare for the possibility of conflict and strong emotions arising amongst students. Consider the emotional and physical safety needs for your students to engage with the drama.

6. The joy of a Process Drama is that ANYTHING can happen! Giving yourself intentional thought and planning time will help you best prepare for all the possibilities when facilitating Process Dramas.

What ethics are you considering as you plan a Process Drama and/or dramatic conventions for your students? What questions do you have?
Video 3: Dramatic Conventions from “A New World,” a Process Drama for high school and undergraduate students
Empire State Creates: Teaching Artist-Led Activities for Everyone

Project Title: Process Drama Creation  
Age(s): Educators  
Time: 8 minutes, 30 seconds  
Arts Discipline: Applied Theatre

ACTIVITY AT A GLANCE

Goal(s):
- Experience three dramatic conventions from ‘A New World’ that intentionally look at role-work with high school and undergraduate students
- Investigate what kinds of conventions you might like to use in your classroom through written reflection (p. 12)

Materials:
- This Activity Plan Guidebook (questions for this video on p. 12)
- Writing utensil
- The script for ‘A New World’ (Appendix 1)

New Word(s)
- Role on a desk
- Role on the wall
- Role-Play

STEPS

Step #1
- Watch Video Three for an introduction to ‘A New World’

Step #2
- If interested, read the script of ‘A New World’ in Appendix 1 for an in-depth experience of the drama

Step #3
- Answer questions in this guide book (p. 12) to spark ideas for Process Dramas and/or conventions in your classroom.
**Video 3 Prompts**

Which of the dramatic activities/conventions from 'A New World' do you feel excited about using with your students (see Appendix 1 for the entire script)?

How might you use these conventions *outside* of a Process Drama in your classroom (e.g., using role on a wall to interrogate characters in a story your class is reading or getting into role as a historical figure to whom your students can ask questions)?
**Video 4: Dramatic Conventions from “Frog and Mouse,” a Process Drama for early childhood students**

*Empire State Creates: Teaching Artist-Led Activities for Everyone*

**Project Title:** Process Drama Creation  
**Age(s):** Educators  
**Time:** 7 minutes  
**Arts Discipline:** Applied Theatre

### ACTIVITY AT A GLANCE

**Goal(s):**
- Experience dramatic conventions from ‘Frog and Mouse’ that intentionally look at role-work and problematizing with early childhood students
- Investigate what kinds of conventions you might like to use in your classroom through written reflection (p. 14)

**Materials:**
- This Activity Plan Guidebook (questions for this video on p. 14)  
- Writing utensil  
- The script for ‘Frog and Mouse’ (Appendix 2)

**New Word(s)**
- Warm-up song  
- Role in a bag  
- Getting into role (with early childhood students)  
- Problematizing

### STEPS

| Step #1 |  
|---|---|
| **Watch Video Three for an introduction to ‘Frog and Mouse’** |

| Step #2 |  
|---|---|
| **If interested, read the script of ‘Frog and Mouse’ in Appendix 2 for an in-depth experience of the drama** |

| Step #3 |  
|---|---|
| **Answer questions in this guide book (p. 14) to spark ideas for Process Dramas and/or conventions in your classroom.** |
Which of the dramatic activities/conventions from Frog and Mouse do you feel excited about using with your students (see Appendix 2 for the entire script)?

How might you use these conventions *outside* of a Process Drama in your classroom (e.g., using role on a wall to interrogate characters in a story your class is reading or getting into role as a historical figure to whom your students can ask questions)?
Video 5: Reflective Activities  
*Empire State Creates: Teaching Artist-Led Activities for Everyone*

**Project Title:** Process Drama Creation  
**Age(s):** Educators  
**Time:** 3 minutes  
**Arts Discipline:** Applied Theatre

### ACTIVITY AT A GLANCE

**Goal(s):**
- Investigate means of reflection in Process Dramas  
- Explore ways to tie the Process Drama into real world experiences and events

**Materials:**
- This Activity Plan Guidebook (questions for this video on p. 18)  
- Writing utensil

**New Word(s)**
- Early learner reflection  
- Poetic prompts  
- Letter writing  
- One-word reflection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEPS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step #1</strong></td>
<td>Watch Video 5 for an overview of reflective activities for Process Dramas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step #2</strong></td>
<td>Read this guidebook (p. 16) for additional reflections and inspiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step #3</strong></td>
<td>Brainstorm what kinds of reflection you want to have in your classroom (p. 18)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Here are the suggested activities outlined in the video:

1. For early learners:
   a. Write a note (or draw a picture) to someone in the drama
   b. Ask the students to write and illustrate the next scene or the ending of the drama

2. Poetic prompts
   a. Here are the prompts that the high school students responded to after the drama, *A New World*:
      i. Name (optional)
      ii. I am…
      iii. I come from…
      iv. I wonder…
      v. I want to change…
      vi. I will…
      vii. Anything else you want to share? Any questions?

3. Letter writing while still in role
   a. Wees described a Process Drama she did with adults. She asked the participants, while still in role, to write a letter to one of their descendants or community members 100 years in the future describing the world they hoped their decisions and actions would create for them.

   ● One-Word Reflection
      ○ Cap the end of each session by simply asking, “What is one word you’re leaving with today?”

Here are some additional ideas and activities for after a Process Drama:

● Auto-Image or Monuments to embody emotions from the drama

● Human Barometer: students place themselves along an imaginary line between two possible choices (i.e. strongly “for” or strongly “against” something, though these choices may vary) Students can fall at any point along the line that aligns with their choices/feelings.

● Create the next scene of the drama
   ○ Through improvisation (where students create the scene on-the-spot) or through playbuilding (where students plan and create their scene)

● Open discussion on the drama and connections to the real world
● Writing: students write newspaper articles about drama, write a postcard or letter to drama’s characters

● Social media: TikTok Videos, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, and more
  ○ This can be done on an actual social media account
  ○ It can also be done on poster board that has the template of a social media account

● Visual art: photography, collages, drawing

● Videos and voice memos: students can respond to drama as themselves, or they might pretend to be a character in the drama.

● Students create a new set of laws for what they want their world to be
**Video 5 Prompts**

When creating response activities, consider what will help your students process their experiences in class. What connections can you make to your existing curriculum, assignments, or practical learning?

What kinds of artistic forms would you like to use with your group in reflection (e.g., letter writing, verbal reflection, poetry, etc.)?
Appendix 1: Script of ‘A New World’

By: Zeynep Akca Malbrough, Meghan Grover & Caitlin Wees

Here is an outline of the conventions for ‘A New World.’ While the accompanying video outlines only three conventions (Role on a Desk, Role on a Wall, and Role-Play), we have included descriptions of our full drama below. This guide is meant for educators to potentially use some of these conventions, whether in a full-length Process Drama or as solo activities.

__________________________________________

Summary of Drama: This drama is based on the water contamination crisis in Flint, Michigan, but is set on a fictional island so that the students can explore issues of classism, climate change, community care, and more from a distance.

Note: This drama was designed for both virtual and in-person learning. This model offers our virtual adaptation.

__________________________________________

Characters (all played by different teachers)*:

Esra, undergraduate college student and member of District 1: originally played by Caitlin

Mel, Esra’s sister and governmental leader in District 1, originally played by Meghan

Maryam, a member and activist of District 5 who is trying to call attention to the water crisis in her area that the government is denying, originally played by Zeynep

*For clarity, when you read the names “Caitlin,” “Meghan,” and “Zeynep,” we are referring to when we are OUT of our role/being ourselves as teachers. When you read our names with a character next to them (like Meghan/Mel), we are referring to when we are in role as a character

__________________________________________

Day 1 (45-60 minutes)

Gallery Walk

‘Gallery Walk:’ a gallery walk shows images, videos, artifacts (etc) of a world or situation. It can support exposition, offer new insights to a historical moment, and more.

Here is the gallery walk that we used for ‘A New World.’ For our virtual adaptation, we created an Instagram account for students to explore; in-person, these images might be taped around the room or projected on a screen for students to engage with. The goal of this ‘Gallery Walk’ is for the students to learn about the world: including the characters (Esra, a young wealthy person in District 1; Mel, Esra’s sister and governmental leader in District 1; and Maryam, a member and activist of District 5 who is trying to call attention to the water crisis in her area that the government is denying).

Instagram #newworldislandforever
Students have the option to choose which image/video they want to see. After the students choose the image/video, the teachers asks the students, “What did you learn?” “What did you learn about this island? What do you think this means?” (Teachers repeat this for each image)

Possible Questions: What do you think they do on this island? What’s the difference between districts? How do you think people feel on the island? How do Mel/Esra/Maryam experience the world differently?

**Teacher in Role**

The ‘Teacher in Role’ convention is when a teacher performs a character. It becomes their responsibility to manage theatrical possibilities and learning opportunities within the dramatic context of the curriculum. As described in ‘Structuring Drama Work,’ they can “excite interest, control the action, invite involvement, provoke tension, challenge superficial thinking, create choices and ambiguity, develop the narrative, and create possibilities for the group to go in role” (54).

Meghan: In this drama, we will be playing characters who will need your help and ask for your advice. When I’m playing Mel, I will wear this business jacket.

Zeynep: When I wear this scarf, I will be playing Maryam.

Caitlin: When I wear this hat, I will be playing Esra.

**Scene & “Overheard Conversations”**

This is a theatrical tool to surprise or get the audience “in” on something and can add tension.

Zeynep: We are about ready to get started with a scene between Esra and Mel. Can I get a 3-2-1-Action?
Esra comes on screen
Esra: Hey!
Mel: Hey you! How’s college life?
Esra: Fine.. look, can I ask you something?
Mel: Do you want a lollipop? Or a flower in your hair? Ooor a pizza? (playing with zoom)
Esra: Mel, seriously. I saw Maryam's video... and now the news...
Mel: Oh?
Esra: I just need to hear it from you... is it true? Is district 5’s water contaminated?
Mel: No of course not! People always want to blame the government when things aren’t going well for them. They need someone to blame for their own actions. It's fake media.
Esra: Maryam’s your friend, do you not believe her at all? She says she did the water report / and...
Mel: Esra, I have never lied to you. We only have each other, I wouldn’t break your trust like that.
Esra: Ok. I trust you.
Mel's phone rings.
Mel: It’s a work call. I'll be right back, i'm just gonna mute myself.
She picks up. Forgets to mute instead turns off camera.
Mel (tries to be discrete): Hi Bryan. I’ll have to be quick, I’m Facetiming my sister. No she can’t hear it. Yes I saw the video - look Maryam has gone off the rails. She’s always been angry. We’re working to get this fixed, but I can only do so much. We need to focus on keeping a positive image... Let's try to keep this quiet. No, District 5 doesn't have the money to do these repairs...We will help, we are trying, but they’re just going to have to wait. The people trust us right now, if we lose that trust we can’t keep them safe.-We can continue this conversation tomorrow at the office.

Mel (realizing she never muted herself): Oh. Did you hear that?
Esra: Uhm. (face plant)

Forum Theater and Simultaneous Dramaturgy

Forum Theater: Created by Augusto Boal, Forum Theatre is a specific form of participatory theatre, where participants - or ‘spect-actors’ - have the power to stop the action of the scene, offer ideas on how to shift the outcome of the scene, and then step into role themselves to try their ideas in real time. We employed this in miniature within this drama - for a fuller understanding of Forum, we recommend reading Boal’s ‘Theatre of the Oppressed.’

Joker: The Joker mediates the Forum theatre interventions between actors and spect-actors. They encourage participants to try their ideas within the scene, and challenge them to critically engage with how their tactics worked after trying them.

Simultaneous Dramaturgy: Because our students often didn’t want to step into the drama themselves, we also offered “Simultaneous Dramaturgy” as a lower-stakes method to try out their ideas. Students would describe exactly how they would like the situation handled to the actor/teacher - who would be sure to ask questions and have a full understanding, before stepping in and trying the students' ideas
for them. This is followed by engaging in reflection with students who offered suggestions, to see what worked and what they may have wanted done differently.

Here is what these conventions looked like following this scene in our drama:

Joker/Zeynep: Woah! What just happened? If you were Esra, what would you be thinking? Would you do something differently?

(Students offer suggestions).

Joker/Zeynep asks students if they want to step in and try their ideas and act out Esra.

If yes… **Forum Theater:**
Joker/Zeynep celebrates this person for coming up! On zoom, this means ‘Spotlighting’ their video. If in-person, Caitlin/Esra gives the audience member a ‘signifer’ costume piece to show that the audience member is now Esra.

Joker/Zeynep: Would it feel good to go back to the moment after Esra overhears her sister? Or would you want to go back to another part of the scene?

(Audience member responds, and they start).

If no… **Simultaneous Dramaturgy**
Esra will ask if she can try their idea for them and will act out herself, checking in with student to be sure she’s getting their idea right.

**Important note for facilitator playing Mel:** the person playing Mel will push Esra to look at multiple points of view, it is helpful to think about asking questions to the person playing Esra. Avoid statements. Try to make this person think about various perspectives. Here are some examples:

- Mel could play at familial loyalty and trust: “Why do you not trust me?” “What does family mean to you?”
- Mel could play at policy and economics: “We are trying to help the water crisis, but there is a lack of funds. How do you think we can protect everyone on this island?” “Are you going to pay for all this?” “How do you think a bad economy would effect this island?”
- Mel could play at safety and security: “What do you think would happen if people found out the government was lying?” “How would we keep people safe?” “What danger could you be in?”

**Day 2 (45-60 minutes)**

**Role on a Desk**

Role on a desk, like ‘role in a bag,’ gives students the opportunity to learn more about a character or situation on their own terms. Students select the items they wish to investigate, and draw their own conclusions and inferences based on what they see. The teacher can then incorporate more of their students’ ideas into the remainder of the drama as it unfolds.
Below is Mels’ desk. Students choose which artifact to examine. Teacher asks them what they think this artifact means? What are they discovering here?

Click here for the link to full Role on a Desk google slides

**Role on the Wall**

*Role on the Wall* is a visual activity where students interrogate various ways that a character is feeling. A role is represented as an outline of a human figure “on a wall” to explore a character.

*Using the ideas from ‘Role on a desk,’ we look at what motivations may be driving Mel’s decision-making by writing them on an outline of her body.*
Here is the outline of the role for this drama:

**Day 3 (45-60 minutes)**

**Getting Students into role**

*Role-play can be an opportunity for students to engage with the drama in a more embodied and connected way. Before putting students in role, the facilitator sets the scene and who they will be role-playing as. This may be accompanied by students putting on signifiers of their own, or simply by the teacher starting the action in role. Once in role, students should have the opportunity to build their roles themselves - either with dedicated time in small groups to create family or community roles, or as we did here, with prompted questions for students to self identify their roles and circumstances within the drama.*

Caitlin: Hi everyone! So now we’re going to shift a bit, and you are all going to step into role as residents of District 5.

Caitlin: You are all residents of District 5 of New World Island, and you have been selected as a committee to decide how this situation should be handled moving forward because you have been most impacted. Feel free to take on attitudes or worldviews that you don’t personally hold, we will be doing this as well - we’re in a fictional world now, so feel free to try on a different hat¹! Go ahead and choose a new name.

¹ This is important to name. Students should feel comfortable to try on different views, and if the facilitator does not state this, then they might feel nervous to do so.
Caitlin: (role building) who got sick? Who has a family who got sick? Who has access to healthcare? Who has family in other districts? Has anyone lost work due to being sick? What sort of jobs do you all do in the community?

**Hot Seating and Problematizing**

*Hot Seating* allows students the opportunity to question and/or interview one or more teachers in role. This is an opportunity for students to challenge what has already been presented, and offer their own ideas and thoughts while in role.

*Problematizing* is a way to complicate and find solutions to issues that arise within the drama. It involves asking questions to deepen students' ideas and challenges them to think about a variety of perspectives when finding solutions for the group.

Here the students, in role as members of district 5, have the opportunity to interview Mel, but they also often give her angry feedback at the harm she’s caused. So, Mel has the opportunity to problematize their comments and questions in an effort to help them imagine other possibilities for their communities.

In one iteration of this drama, the classroom teacher wanted to be part of the action - he created the role of Dr. Saleem, an activist from District 5, and co-facilitated this portion of the drama with us.

Maryam/Zeynep: Hey you know me - I’m from this district 5. You may have heard I did this report. We have Mel Addams here from New World Trust to answer any questions. We also have Dr. Saleem from the Movement for Clean Water here - thank you Dr. Saleem for joining us.

Dr. Saleem: What a horrible situation. Raise your hand if you know someone who got sick? Raise your hand if you’re feeling frustrated at the government? WE NEED CHANGE!!!!!!!!!!!!! BURN IT DOWN!!!!!!!!

Mel: New World Trust is regretful of the events that have transpired. In an effort to make things right, we have authorized this committee to make a recommendation as to how this situation should be handled moving forward. I’m here to answer questions and listen to any feedback.

**Commission:**

Commission: this convention is a means of setting a collective task with clear expectations and a real world purpose. It is intentionally difficult and complex. It is an opportunity for the group to use their expertise to independently create resources that have a real world connection. It can involve “Curating exhibitions, editing collections or preparing evidence, organizing conferences,” (etc.) (Structuring Drama Work 14)

In this drama, we use ‘Commission’ to invite the students, in role, to create recommendations to their government. To allow equitable space for their ideas, we put students into small groups and tasked their groups to come to consensus on what suggestions they would like to put forward. Teachers in role would then help problematize around student’s ideas, pushing them to consider every side of what their proposition entails.
Zeynep/Maryam: We will now head into small groups to discuss your recommendations. In your groups, please come up with a recommendation for how the situation should be handled moving forward. Please address the following questions: What should we do in this moment to make things better? What actions - if any - should we take against Mel and other leaders? And elect 1 person to represent your group in sharing back your recommendation.

- Make sure someone is taking notes
- Choose 1 person to represent your group to share back

**De-roling**

This moment allows them to step out of the drama, acknowledge any emotional moments they may have experienced as being part of the drama (not real life), and reflect on moments of learning while in role.

Meghan: Unzip our roles and change your names back if you’d like. Look at this character and think of something you learned.

Remember, all views today were in role and do not necessarily reflect our views.

In the zoom chat or speak aloud: write something about today that you’re going to leave thinking about…

**Day 4: Reflection (45-60 minutes)**

At this point, the drama is complete. We focus on reflection and supporting the students to think about how this applies to the world today and how it might be a catalyst to imagining a different kind of future.

We start with the student’s take-aways by asking questions like: What is resonating or sticking with you from the drama? What moments surprised you? What connections are you making to the real world?

From there, we share the inspiration behind our drama - in this case, the water crisis in Flint, Michigan - accompanied with information, updates, and images on the ongoing situation.

**Poetic Reflection**

We end the reflection with the students responding to poetic prompts:

i. Name (optional)

ii. I am...

iii. I come from…
iv. I wonder…

v. I want to change…

vi. I will…

vii. Anything else you want to share? Any questions?
Appendix 2: Script of ‘Frog and Mouse’

Developed and Performed by Meghan Grover with immense support from Courtney McClellan

Here is an outline of the conventions for ‘Frog and Mouse.’ While the accompanying video outlines only a few conventions, we have included descriptions of our full drama below. This guide is meant for educators to potentially use some of these conventions, whether in a full-length Process Drama or as a solo activity.

Summary of Drama: In the drama Frog and Mouse, the students explore what to do when their friend, Frog, excludes Mouse from his birthday party. We practice being an ally as we navigate complex issues of friendship, bullying, and conflict resolution.

Characters:

Autumn: leader of explorers

Frog

Mouse

This piece can be performed by one teacher who is in role as Autumn and puppeteers Frog and Mouse. It can also be performed by teachers playing each role. This script describes the drama with only one teacher leading it. Note: the puppets can be made with simple materials, such as a spoon puppet or paper bag puppet.

Day 1 (30-45 minutes)

PREP:

- Put Mouse puppet in teacher’s pocket or a bag so they can easily access it
  - Mouse puppet has a blue shirt, which can be added with blue construction paper  
    ■ See Video 4 for Mouse puppet
- Get backpack ready with ‘To Do’ list (that says “Plant three trees” and “Help baby robins”), water bottle, binoculars, hand-drawn photo of Autumn and explorers that says “I love explorers!”
  - Note: these items can shift based on what the teacher has. Any objects that elicit feelings and ideas about how Autumn and explorers travel through the forest and take care of it will work!
- Optional: Set up “cave” in the classroom or in the hallway. This can be done with chairs facing one another and a blanket hanging over them.
  - Note: this is in no way required. An alternative “cave” is in the script (p. 31) and requires no setup).
Ritual/Opening Song

Building an opening routine through song and movement helps early childhood students focus and play.

Teacher: I’m going to sing a brand new song with you today. Later, after we’ve all learned the tune we can sing it together. But for now, would you try the hand motions, or 'gestures' with me?

It goes like this: Um Ah, went the little green frog one day, Um Ah went the little green frog, Um Ah went the little green frog one day and his eyes went Um Ah too!...Squeak Squeak went the little gray mouse, one day. Hello, said the little green frog, and his eyes didn't go um ah any more, cuz he found a new friend on a log.

We are going to go into a forest today, with lots of animals. What was one animal in the song?

Teacher explores the sounds and movement of Frog and Mouse. Students can also offer additional animals in a forest.

Role in a Bag

Role in a Bag is a process of asking questions about items in a bag that builds students’ understanding and inferences about a character. In this drama, the teacher tells the students that Autumn owns the bag. The items become a tool to build suspense and learn more about Autumn.

Teacher shares that they found a special object today and holds up a backpack. Teacher asks students what this item is.

Teacher listens to students’ ideas.

Teacher says that this is a friend, Autumn’s, backpack. Teacher tells students that Autumn said that they could look through the back pack to learn more about her.

Teacher opens the bag and pulls out a ‘To Do’ list that says “Plant three trees” and “Help baby robins.” Teacher asks students what this list is.

Teacher asks students what they are learning about Autumn.

Teacher continues to go through the bag and ask the students what the items are, what Autumn might use them for, and what these items say about Autumn.

Transitioning into Role: Teacher and Students

As a teacher getting into role for early learners, using specific costumes and demonstration of what being in role and out of role looks like is important.
When getting early learners into role, it is helpful to offer tools for embodiment, like putting on their costumes. Also, with early learners, having them all be in role as one group supports their engagement and focus. For example, in this drama, the students all get into role as “explorers,” as opposed to them being different individuals.

Teacher: Guess who is going to be the explorers today? You! We are going to go into the forest.

We need to get ready to become explorers! Let’s put on our jackets.

(Calls to a student) Oh, friend, what color is your jacket?

Everyone let’s whisper in our hands what color our jacket is.

We also have back packs! What goes in here? (Take students’ ideas: water bottles? Snacks? Unicorns?)

Autumn will be wearing this hat. So, when I put on this hat, I will be Autumn (Teacher puts on hat), can we all say hello to Autumn?

And when I take it off (takes off hat), I go back to being myself, Ms. Meghan, can we all say hello to Ms. Meghan?

Transitioning into the world

Having a routine to “get into the world” helps early learners focus and know where they are in the drama.

To get into our forest, let’s draw a door in front of us, and let’s all step through…

As we draw our door, we will say “ex-plor-ers” and step through, are you ready?

(Draw the door and say explorers, teacher puts on hat to become Teacher/Autumn)

World Building

This kind of world-building helps the students imagine themselves in the story’s setting.

Teacher/Autumn: Hi explorers!! How are you doing? (Ask questions and play).

Explorers, there is an animal who is crying in the forest! I don’t know what’s wrong. The animal is in a cave. Would you come with me to help the animal?

To get to the cave, we have to go through three different places in the forest. Here is a map. (Teacher/Autumn reveals a map that has three parts: an area of thorny branches, a large lake, mud, and a cave).

To get to the cave, we have to first go through all these thorny, pointy, branches, second through the mud, and third a lake.
Let’s first go through all these branches! How do we do this?2

Teacher/Autumn embraces the students’ ideas. She repeats this with the lake and the mud. Within the journey, Teacher/Autumn also pauses and asks the students to look at this beautiful forest. She asks them *what they see, hear, smell, feel… maybe we pick up flowers? Put dirt on our faces? Whatever they want*.3

Eventually, students come up to the “cave”

**Teacher/Autumn:** How do we get inside? It is dark and cold…

Teacher embraces students ideas to move into the cave.

Students enter (crawling underneath blankets4) Teacher/Autumn begins to puppeteer the mouse puppet (that is hidden in the cave).

The mouse is crying.

**Mouse:** I can’t walk. I cut my paw on a sharp rock. And it hurts.

Students offer solutions. Teacher/Autumn embraces them.

Mouse later says that she’s hungry and she’d love to eat dinner with the explorers.

**Teacher/Autumn** leads the explorers in song as they exit the cave. They all sit down in a circle to eat dinner.

Teacher/Autumn comments on how beautiful and dark it is getting. She points to the stars above. She asks students what they see in the sky.

Students each share the food they are bringing to dinner. Everyone eats each other’s suggestions.

**De-roling**

*To transition early learners back into their classroom.*

Mouse says that she’s tired and has to go to sleep. Teacher/Autumn says that she’s sleepy too and stretches her body. She asks the students to stretch their bodies with her.

**Teacher/Autumn** says that she will see them tomorrow. She leads them in drawing a door again and saying, “Ex-plor-ers” as they go back to class.

Everyone takes off explorer outfits and saves them for next time.

---

2 If the students offer to tear down all the branches, I say, “We want to help the forest, so how can we keep the branches alive and still move through this?” I try to spark ideas around taking care of the forest.

3 Adding songs into the journey can be helpful as well. Perhaps you sing “Row row row your boat” when going through the lake, for example. Or maybe you make up a song about hiking or exploring when moving around the room.

4 A way to adapt this is to ask students to sit in their spots or their desks and turn off the lights to show that they are in a cave.
Day 2 (30-45 minutes)

PREP:
- Have a bag or pocket with two puppets inside: Frog and Mouse (with a blue shirt)

Ritual/Opening Song:
Teacher repeats the song from Day 1. This time the students will better know the moves and words. For fun, the teacher might sing the song extra fast, and then extra slow.

Transitioning into Role and World
Repeat ‘Transitioning into Role and World’ ritual:
- Teacher demonstrating when they’re Autumn, using the hat
- Teacher leads students in becoming explorers by putting on explorer outfits and getting objects they need
- Teacher leads students in drawing a door to step into the world.

Diaries, letters, journals, messages
This convention is when texts are written out to build tension, show evidence, build understanding and reflection, and more.

Teacher/Autumn welcomes explorers again and tells them that she received a letter from a Frog!

She reads the letter:

Hey explorers, my name is Frog! It is my birthday party tomorrow!!! It is going to be RAINY - of course - which is my favorite weather…. and I have a lot of things planned -- **swim in the pond, jump in in the puddles**, and **eat fly pizza and worm cake**! Look, here are some pictures of the pond, puddles, and worm cake!
Will you help me come set up for my party? I want to decorate with leaves and sticks and MUD!
Love, Mr. Frog

Teacher/Autumn shows these three images from Frog.
- A pond
- Muddy puddles
- Worms in the dirt

Teacher/Autumn asks the students what they might like to do in the pond, muddy puddles, and dirt.

World Building
Teacher/Autumn looks up at the sky and says that it is not raining! It is so hot outside! What do you do when you’re feeling hot to cool off?

(Teacher/Autumn takes their ideas)

Then we hear Frog (puppet controlled by Teacher/Autumn) crying.

**Problematizing**

*Problematizing is a way to complicate and find solutions to issues that arise within the drama. It involves asking questions to deepen students’ ideas and challenges them to think about a variety of perspectives when finding solutions for the group.*

Frog is crying. Frog tells explorers he is so sad because it is so hot and sunny. He shows the three images, but there is no water!

- Dried up pond
- Dirt (with no puddles)
- Dirt (with no worms!)

Teacher/Autumn asks them how they can help Frog. Teacher/Autumn uses their ideas to help with the pond, the puddles, and the worms.

The students find ways to bring water into the forest.

Frog thanks the explorers and says, “See you tomorrow!”

**De-roling**

Repeat ritual from Day 1: Students draw the door to leave, and they take off their explorer outfits.

**Still Image & Thought-Tracking**

*Still Image comes from Augusto Boal’s Image Theater, where an audience member creates a frozen image to represent a character, feeling, idea, and more. Thought-tracking is a tool where the person making the image with their body says aloud what their image might think or say.*

Teacher asks students how Frog must be feeling about his birthday party.

Teacher asks them to show this feeling with their bodies by making a ‘sculpture’ or ‘Frozen Image.’

Teacher asks students to share what Frog would think or say, and then they all repeat this together.

---

5 This often becomes quite magical, which is totally okay. Embrace the magic. Students might also separate, some collectively “making it rain” while others pour imaginary buckets of water into the imaginary dirt.
Day 3 (30-45 minutes)

PREP:
- Have a bag or pocket with two puppets inside: Frog and Mouse (with a blue shirt)
- Coloring utensils and paper for drawing activity

Ritual/Opening Song:
Teacher repeats the song from Day 1. This time the students will better know the moves and words. For fun, the teacher might sing the song extra fast, and then extra slow.

Transitioning into Role and World
Repeat ‘Transitioning into Role and World' ritual:
- Teacher demonstrating when they’re Autumn, using the hat
- Teacher leads students in becoming explorers by putting on explorer outfits and getting objects they need
- Teacher leads students in drawing a door to step into the world.

World Building
Teacher/Autumn welcomes the explorers and asks them if they are excited for Frog’s birthday party. She asks them what presents they got for Frog!

Then mouse comes along…

Mouse: Hi friends! I am so excited for Frog’s birthday party today. What did you get Frog as a present? Oh, I forgot Frog’s present, which I’m so excited to give him! I’ll be right back.

Teacher/Autumn asks students how they think Frog is feeling.

Frog appears. He’s so excited that they are here! Frog tells the explorers that he has something very important to tell them and asks them to sit down.

Frog tells them that he does not like Mouse because of the blue shirt she wears. Frog says that he does not want anyone who wears a blue shirt at his party. Frog chants, No mice allowed! No mice allowed! (Students may or may not join)

Frog tries to get them to chant with him.

Explorers will very likely push back and tell Frog that this is mean.

Frog: How am I being mean? The mouse is weird!

Mouse arrives with her present for Frog!

Mouse: Hi Frog! I got you a present!
Frog: Mouse we were just talking about how silly your blue shirt is.

Mouse: What’s wrong with my shirt?

Frog: Mice should not wear a blue shirt. We don’t want you at my party anymore…

Mouse: What?

Frog: Yeah. Go away and take back your present. (Mouse leaves)

Frog tells the students that he’s happy Mouse is gone.

If the students tell Frog that he is mean, Frog asks them how he is being mean. Frog also asks them if they are still going to go to his birthday party.

After problematizing about why and how the Frog is being mean, the Frog leaves for his birthday party.

**Picture Reflection**

*Giving the students an opportunity to reflect on the drama through drawing helps them process what happened. It also allows them to express their ideas individually, as opposed to with the whole group.*

Teacher/Autumn leads the students in shaking their bodies (to shake out any stress from this moment).

Teacher/Autumn asks the students what they should do next… do they go to the Frog’s party? Do they help Mouse? What might mouse need?

Teacher/Autumn asks students to draw a picture of what they should do next.

As the explorers draw, Teacher/Autumn thanks them for their different ideas.

**De-roling**

Repeat ritual from Day 1: Students draw the door to leave, and they take off their explorer outfits.

---

**Day 4 (30-45 minutes)**

**PREP:**

- Have a bag with two puppets inside: Frog and Mouse (with a blue shirt)
  - Have Mouse ears handy in case the students want to step into role as the mouse.
Check-in

Because Day 3 can bring up lots of emotions, checking in with the students and supporting them to shake out their bodies is important.

Teacher: What happened yesterday? How are you feeling? Sometimes when I am stressed, I take deep breaths. Can we all try that together? I also shake out my body. Let's all shake out our bodies. Is there anything else you do when you're feeling stressed?

How do you think the mouse is feeling? Can you all show that with your bodies? Can anyone share what the mouse might be thinking?

Let's go see the mouse, I think she needs our help today.

Transitioning into Role and World

Repeat ‘Transitioning into Role and World’ ritual:

- Teacher demonstrating when they're Autumn, using the hat
- Teacher leads students in becoming explorers by putting on explorer outfits and getting objects they need
- Teacher leads students in drawing a door to step into the world.

Problematizing

Mouse: Hi explorers… yesterday was Frog’s birthday party, but I did not go because he did not let me. He did not let me go because I am wearing this blue shirt. What should I do now?

As the teacher puppeteers the mouse, Teacher/Mouse challenge the students to think about how we can take care of ourselves, be who we are, advocate for our needs, and sometimes let go of friends that are hurting us. The teacher does this through asking questions, as opposed to telling the students an answer. And, if the students do say, “Mouse should change so she can stay friends with Frog,” that is still ok! Teacher/Mouse can ask what other people think and build a space for multiple perspectives.

Here are some possibilities based on previous times that I’ve done this drama with early childhood students (Note: these are just some of what I’ve encountered, but anything is possible):

- The students might offer to get Mouse a new shirt.
  - Mouse can ask them if people should change for their friends? Why or why not? Mouse can ask students what they love about themselves?
- The students might offer to hurt Frog.
  - Mouse can ask students what options she has if she doesn't want to hurt Frog?
- The students might offer to not be friends with Mr. Frog anymore.
  - Mouse can tell them that this might be the best option, even though it feels sad. Mouse can ask students how she would tell Frog this? What if Frog gets mad?
- Students might offer that the Mouse should tell Frog that he hurt her feelings.
○ Mouse can ask them how to have that conversation: what should she say? How can she feel brave when she has the conversation?

**Forum Theater and Simultaneous Dramaturgy**

*Forum Theater: Created by Augusto Boal, Forum Theatre is a specific form of participatory theatre, where participants - or ‘spect-actors’ - have the power to stop the action of the scene, offer ideas on how to shift the outcome of the scene, and then step into role themselves to try their ideas in real time. We employed this in miniature within this drama - for a fuller understanding of Forum, we recommend reading Boal’s ‘Theatre of the Oppressed.’*

*Simultaneous Dramaturgy: If the students do not want to step into the drama themselves, I also offer “Simultaneous Dramaturgy” as a lower-stakes method to try out their ideas. Students would describe exactly how they would like the situation handled to the actor/teacher - who would be sure to ask questions and have a full understanding, before stepping in a trying the students ideas for them. This is followed by engaging in reflection with students who offered suggestions, to see what worked and what they may have wanted done differently.*

Depending on the student’s ideas, Teacher/Mouse tells the students that she wants to tell the Frog what they’ve suggested…

Frog enters

Frog: Ha ha mouse you are still wearing that blue shirt!

Mouse: Frog, you hurt my feelings yesterday…

Frog: If you just don’t wear the blue shirt then everything will be fine!

Mouse: Frog- I-

Mouse turns to students and asks them what she should say next. If the students are eager, Teacher/Autumn can also invite them up to “become” mouse and act her out (Teacher has mouse ears handy so that the students can get in role as mouse).

Here are some possibilities of starting conversations based on previous times that I’ve done this drama with early childhood students (Note: these are just some of what I’ve encountered, but anything is possible):

- Student/Mouse tells Teacher/Frog that he hurt her feelings
  - Teacher/Frog can respond with, “I don’t care, why can’t you just change your shirt?”
    - Mouse: Because I love my shirt.
    - Frog: But I don’t like it. Why not change it to make me happy?
- Student/Mouse tells Teacher/Frog that she does not want to be his friend
  - Teacher/Frog can say that makes him sad. Teacher/Frog asks, “Why not?”
- Frog can eventually ask, “Well what can I do differently?” “How can I be a good friend of you?” “What do you need?”
  - Student/Mouse tells Frog that she hates him
    - Teacher/Frog can ask why? And lead to dialogue about what he should do differently.

Depending on the students’ actions, Frog will eventually leave the space.

*With early childhood students, students may struggle with forum theatre and simultaneous dramaturgy. Alternatives might be:*
  - Teacher invites each student to “become Mouse” in their seat (without mouse ears) and they each say one line of dialogue to Frog.
  - Teacher Invites all students to “become mouse” in their seat (without mouse ears) and speaks with them as Frog
  - Teacher invites each student to “become Mouse” and write a letter or draw a picture that tells Frog what they want

**De-roling**
Repeat ritual from Day 1: Students draw the door to leave, and they take off their explorer outfits.

Teacher asks students to shake their bodies and take a breath, acknowledging that this is hard.

**Reflection**
*Reflecting on the drama is important for early learners to shake off any stressful emotions and also apply the drama’s themes into their lives.*

Teacher tells the students that they were all very brave today when they helped Mouse stand up for herself. Teacher asks each student to make a brave pose with their body, and they all repeat this.

Teacher asks students to write or draw a picture of how they felt when they helped Mouse today.