

The Discovered Object: A Process Drama Structure

Materials: Large index cards
Lined or unlined paper
Markers
An object suggestive of an ancient or futuristic society (e.g., a geode, a disc with cryptic script/text, a twisted medal piece)

When we make a drama, we can become someone else in a different place and time without ever leaving this room. That's why I like making a drama. I'd like you to join me now in making a drama. Let's make a drama together.

1. Direct participants to think about scientists, archeologists, anthropologists, geologists. What do these scientists do? What do they study?
2. Invite the participants to imagine that they are one of the scientists they have described above. Have them come up with a name, and write the name with a marker on a large index card. The is folded and serves as their identification card, placed in front of them at their desks or tables. Advise them not to use silly names. Be serious!
3. The drama leader tells the group that he/she will move to the other side of the room for a few seconds and when he/she returns he/she will not be Mrs. Or Mr. _____. "Please try to figure out who I am by how I speak with you and who you are because of the way I speak with you."
4. The drama leader returns and greets the scientists. "'David, good to see you. I so appreciated that article you recently published on the geologic discoveries at Sector 12.' 'Maria, how did your work go at the solar lab? Well, I hope.' 'Sarah, welcome. I know this is your first meeting at an Academy Assembly.'"
5. Bring the group to order. Begin the meeting. As one of the CEOs the Academy, you have an important discovery to discuss with them. They must be sworn to secrecy because this is a most intriguing discovery. Very important work has been going on at Landfall 7, under the direction of Dr. Diane Thomas, for the past two years.

6. Ask: What do they remember about some of the discoveries made at Landfall 7. Elicit their responses and confirm them ("Yes, I see, but you do remember how difficult it was to _____. Do they remember the signs of a civilization found there, at Landfall 7?") If no one responds, then offer some reminders. "You remember, don't you? Dr. _____ right here at this meeting. She was awarded the Garnet Prize for her discovery about _____"
7. Read from Dr. Thomas's log. April 15. She discovered an object, surrounded in light and harmonious sound. Do we believe this? Should we? Who knows of Dr. Thomas's reputation? (To help invest belief in the drama world we are building, it will be helpful to have a folder or spiral and simulate reading.)
8. Uncover the object. Direct the participants to observe the object and write their immediate feelings and thoughts about it. If time allows, direct them to come close to the object and observe it. After all, it's so important that it's on display in the Academy Chamber (the meeting room for important convocations like this one.)
9. Ask the scientists to reconvene when they'd had enough time to observe and write. Say: "Now you can see how important this discovery is. I welcome your thought and feelings about what you are seeing and what you think the object might mean to us here in this galaxy." Encourage each participant to read their writing aloud. Respond with statements like "I see. You've been thinking along Dr. Thomas's line of thought. She also _____" "Yes, of course, Dr. _____, this fits with the last presentation you made on _____ at the Academy. Very exciting science that was!"
10. Following this exchange of ideas, move to "How should we proceed? Is it our obligation to reveal this discovery to the public? To the scientific community? To the media? I truly need your in-put; the Executive Council will meet with me this afternoon, and I know they will ask me for recommendation. At this pint, I do have some ideas of my own, but your suggestions will give me the points of view I need. After all, we are all Academy members."

11. To help establish believability in the drama world we are creating, it will be helpful to record their ideas on chart paper, a way of saving their suggestions for my meeting with the Executive Council and for the Academy's Archives. (And they might come in handy in later episode of this drama, if you decide to add more episodes.)
12. As the meeting comes to a close, urge the scientists to give a lot of thought about how we might proceed. A plan of action as to what to do with this discovery. "Remember, this is top secret." Remind them that a religious organization has been in touch with me about the discovery. Somehow there's been a leak. Let's hope it is not one of the scientists!
13. Thank them for attending the meeting.
14. As they rise to start leaving, describe the "freeze frame" technique. Say, "Freeze." "When I tap you lightly on the shoulder, please come alive and say what's on your mind about today's meeting and our discovery." Then: "unfreeze."
15. Explain: let's move out of role and be ourselves now. Let's leave this drama world we're creating together and re-enter this room out of role.
16. Unpack the drama. Ask for a review of what we did, how we proceeded. Ask about the leader's roles, the participants' roles, how they felt about participating, the skills learned, the standards addressed, and ways we might extend this drama. Extensions might include: the scientists write in their journals about the meeting and their feelings about the discovered object; an interview with Dr. Thomas; a debate among the scientists concerning releasing/revealing news about the discovery; the meeting with the Executive Council; prepared episodes that explore the society in which the object was used (abused?); scientists' journal entries ten years after the discovery; media coverage through a leak by the religious organization mentioned above. Use your imagination! Ask for suggestions.