

# + Introduction



| Week 1, lesson 1  | Duration   |
|---|------------|
| Students will learn about the Theatre of the Oppressed by exploring the techniques of Augusto Boal's invisible theatre and image theatre. | 75 minutes |

| Stage 4 outcomes   | Stage 5 outcomes  |
|--|---|
| A student:   | A student:  |
| 4.1.4 explores a range of ways to structure dramatic work in collaboration with others.  | 5.1.4 explores, structures and refines ideas using dramatic forms, performance styles, dramatic techniques, theatrical conventions and technologies.    |
| 4.2.3 explores and uses aspects of dramatic forms, performance styles, theatrical conventions and technologies to create dramatic meaning. | 5.2.3 employs a variety of dramatic forms, performance styles, dramatic techniques, theatrical conventions and technologies to create dramatic meaning. |
| 4.3.2 recognises the function of drama and theatre in reflecting social and cultural aspects of human experience.                          | 5.3.2 analyses the contemporary and historical contexts of drama.   |

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| Element learning opportunities  |   |
|---|---|
|  Tension |  Focus |

## Lesson Body

| Element learning opportunities  |  |
|---|--|
|  Situation           |  Role and character |
|  Audience engagement |  Moment             |
|  Movement            |  Symbol             |
|  Dramatic meaning    |  |

## Introduction

Have scene 1 of the [digital resource package](#) projected as they enter the room.

### Introduction of issues-based theatre: (approximately 20 minutes)

Begin with a short piece of 'invisible theatre' (a pre-planned scenario) to demonstrate to students the concept that theatre can scrutinise an issue and can stage a variety of perspectives on that issue to prompt a response from audiences.

### Teacher in role (set up before class)

Prior to this sequence, the teacher selects and briefs two students on invisible theatre. Explain to them during the previous task. They are to engage in an argument. Eg, over a photo one of them has posted on Instagram of the other (which they posed for), who wants it deleted. Encourage them to make the argument as real as possible - they both feel they are in the right. (On one side, you knew you were in the photo, you posed for it, it is my photo, you post plenty of photos on your own page, etc... on the other, I don't want people I don't know

seeing it, you should not post pictures of me without my permission, other people have now shared it, people are making fun of me in the comments, etc.) Interrupt the argument and get the students to explain the issue. Ask the rest of the class who is right and why? Encourage the rest of the class to weigh in on who is right, and why.

Following the class discussion, ask them to focus on today's lesson and move through the Prospero scene, where the 'invisible theatre' is unmasked and the teacher explains the concept of Boal's 'invisible theatre', to show the effectiveness of enactment to provoke discussion and subsequent change on an issue.

### Discussion Questions:

- What was Boal trying to achieve through this theatre?
- Why was it important to have the 'audience' involved and discussing the issues?



## Main body

### Introduction to u.b.do, and Boal games: (15 minutes)

Explain that Boal would get a group of participants to, like we just did as a class, discuss problems of oppression. Just before getting up to do practical work, quickly examine invisible theatre.

### Discuss u.b.do

Teacher asks -

'In this unit, we are going to think about, reflect upon and explore our digital behaviours and the behaviour of others we see online. We are surrounded by information of communication, as you have grown up in the digital age as digital natives. Growing up you are leaving behind a digital footprint. If we think about the kinds of behaviours and choices - I want to ask you - do you think your footprint is a good trail to follow? Is your footprint a permanent tattoo?

Alternatively, think about how you can be more proactive in making a positive change to your online behaviour and influence.'

Brainstorm what the tag 'u.b.do' stands for.

Students should examine the title and subtitle. What does it mean to be human in the digital age? How do online and social rituals differ?

Identify negative things that may happen online. Have students enter three words or phrases to create a word cloud. For example:

- trolling
- sexting
- cyberbullying
- ghosting
- scams
- spam
- identity theft
- grooming
- soliciting
- phishing
- catfishing, etc.

### Create a word cloud

Begin by creating an interactive class word cloud via mentimeter (this is a free application).

1. Go to: <https://www.mentimeter.com/>
2. Sign in with google  
(DoE teachers have an education google account: [firstname.secondname@education.nsw.gov.au](mailto:firstname.secondname@education.nsw.gov.au))

If this is your first time using mentimeter you will be asked two questions: purpose (education) and your roll (teacher)

3. Click New Presentation
4. Choose 'Word Cloud'

You can prepare this before class. When you go back to it during class time, simply choose your prepared slide and:

5. You will be given a class code, to give to your students
6. Either via the [digital resource package](#), or on their phones, they can participate by going to: <https://www.menti.com/> and entering the code.

The class can now all enter phrases that will be a part of the word cloud.

Discuss the answers that arrive on screen.

### Warm-ups (30 minutes)

In this warm-up sequence, the teacher announces and talks through each change before it occurs, then gives a signal such as a clap for the change to happen. This is to keep the flow going. There should be no break between the sections.

There should be absolutely no talking in this sequence. All communication is through eyes and visual or physical signals. Eye contact with partners is imperative.

### Mirroring Warm-up (see video example)

1. The students stand in two equal lines facing each other across a reasonably wide space. Name the sides A and B. A side starts as the leaders of the movements (Boal calls them the 'subjects') and the opposite side start as the mirrors (the 'images'). The pairs should work together using slow, easy-to-follow movements. It should be impossible for an observer to tell who is leading and who is following.
2. Without there being a pause, the Teacher asks the sides to swap on a given signal. There should be no perceptible break in the movements for this change-over. The whole thing should look as if nothing has changed.
3. The Teacher now announces that neither side is the leader. Instead, either one of the partners can lead at any time. Once again, there is no break in the action. The movements should flow smoothly on. No one should impose their will on their partner.
4. On the teacher's signal, the students start to move their line positions sideways into a grouping which is precisely mirrored by the other side. Care must be taken to remember that there is an imaginary mirror down the centre. Once again, no side is the leader of this action. They keep moving and adjusting the group image.
5. The teacher announces that on a signal the mirror will break into lots of separate mirrors scattered throughout the room. Without breaking the slow rhythm of the movements established, the group breaks off into pairs again and start to move, absolutely mirroring each other's movements, around the room.
6. The teacher will ask the pairs to find new partners three times during this sequence: the first change will be close, the second further away and the third right across the room. They need to acknowledge their partner via silent negotiation. Movements, even when crossing the room, must remain slow and fluid - the movement should be what attracts someone to their new partner.
7. The teacher announces that each individual group should now find their own rhythm of movement - rather than slow and smooth every pair should have a different movement.
8. Finally, the teacher asks that the whole room should seek to unify - to all be moving in the same rhythm. Boal stresses that this is only an 'attempt' to unify, because, as always, nothing should be imposed.

### The Modelling Warm-up

1. Students return to the two lines. Explain that line will take it in turn 'sculpt' the other line into statues representing the following:
  - o joy
  - o anguish
  - o anger
  - o hope.

Again, this exercise is done in silence, the statues must execute only the movements specified for them - they must not think for themselves - if a sculptor has created a movement which would cause the statue to lose balance and fall - then that must be what the statue does. This teaches responsibility to the sculptors who must watch that a movement will not cause a problem.

1. Move into groups of three. Now the 'sculptor' moves both statues into a tableau that represent oppression. One must be the oppressor, and one must be the oppressed. Take it in turns to be the sculptor for the following titles:
  - o jealousy
  - o superiority
  - o indifference.

## The Mask Exercise

When Boal talked about masks he was referring the imaginary masks people use to cope with different situations e.g. at work, with family, with friends, most people play different roles - wear different social masks. A social mask is simply the outward signs people employ to cope with a particular situation, to blend in with a group, almost as a ritual.

Pose your students the following questions: What kind of 'masks' do people 'wear' in different situations, in general? Think of as many as possible. What kind of masks do individuals within the group feel that they employ? How do they think people perceive them? What has 'forced' their own particular 'masks'? e.g. is it a social ritual that has determined them?

Breaking into pairs, play the following scenes with the appropriate 'social masks' - look for the archetypal response.

Try a series of greetings between different characters, to identify the rituals involved:

- long term couple
- couple in new relationship
- two girls
- two boys
- teacher and pupil
- employer and employee
- doctor and patient
- interviewer and interviewee
- two Heads of State
- two soldiers
- colonel and sergeant.

Spotlight performances (stop all performances and have everyone turn to watch a single pair) and identify the rituals, and 'social mask's' used through discussion and observation.

Try this again, but instead of simple greetings, you will be given a more complex context. Play your character as if you feel they are in the right and keep to the appropriate mask/ritual for the situation, however, on a signal from your teacher you will swap masks (swap roles). Try not to stop the conversation during the swap.

As the teacher, stop students who ignore social masks and rituals

- a teacher reprimands a student for having their phone out in class. (swap roles on a signal, you can do this more than once)
- during a job interview the interviewer questions the interviewee about their social media posts. Once again, swap roles on a signal
- a younger student approaches an older student about an embarrassing video they posted on social media
- for this last one, stand back to back and imagine you are leaving comments on social media, and redo the last scenario.

Again, spotlight different performances, and discuss the effect of having to swap roles and argue both points of view.



## Conclusion (10 minutes)

- Discuss the games. What do you think was the purpose of each game?
- Discuss Boal's initial objectives. After doing these exercises, did they succeed?
- In the last section, what is it about 'digital masks' that is different to 'social masks'. Boal described this as 'facades adopted under certain social conditions' - but this was before computers. How is it that we can have such dramatically different social masks and rituals online?



## Differentiation

| Extension   | Life skills   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Hypothesising</b> is an effective way to encourage students to synthesise their knowledge from the lesson.</p> <p>Students suggest ways they could use 'invisible theatre' at school in the coming week to prompt peers to think about their online digital masks?</p> <p><b>Challenging questions</b></p> <p><b>Provocative question</b> - Human's communicate in many ways. Why will human communication always be complex?</p> <p><b>Creative reading skills</b> - During this unit, in consultation with the teacher, the student will select, read and provide a review on a relevant book.</p> <p><b>Creative listening skills</b> - Students find and listen to a podcast that is relevant to the unit. They outline the narrative arc or structure of the podcast.</p> <p>There are extra options on google sites to learn more about Boal and extra examples to examine.</p> | <p>Many of the activities in this lesson will be accessible to Life Skills students. Depending on an individual student's particular profile however activities may need to be adjusted for example by offering further examples when explaining concepts ('u.b.do').</p> <p>Scaffolding practical activities to a greater degree and breaking down steps to be followed until students are comfortable with accessing activities or concepts being covered may also be required.</p> <p>Content questioning can be mostly memory recall and reflection using <a href="#">Revised Bloom's Taxonomy</a></p> <p><b>Invisible theatre</b> - student(s) as observers of the oppression shown might be offered examples of similar situations they may have seen in a tv show/film/ book they might be familiar with to encourage them to identify that when we watch oppression enacted even in a fictional context it can be a powerful way of evoking thought about that oppression.</p> <p><b>Real life contexts</b> - where they have had negative experiences online might be elicited from students and concrete examples suggested to assist them with coming up with ideas for words to contribute to the class mentimeter.</p> <p><b>Social Masks</b> - students may be encouraged to draw or make a collage of images of people adopting social masks drawing from photos from newspapers, magazines in different contexts.</p> |

## Reference list

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