

Introduction

Physical Warm-Up Games

Warming up physically before a drama session or rehearsal not only prepares the body for the physical rigours ahead but also gets the blood pumping to the brain allowing better concentration and mental application. A set pattern of physical stretches that warms up each part of the body also allows messages between the brain and the body to travel more efficiently and can also ease students away from the world of jumbled thoughts they arrived with and into the world of the rehearsal room. The stretches you use can be the same as those for a sports warm-up but don't allow students to push themselves too much as it is a drama class we are preparing for and not a pole vault. It is advisable to keep these warm-up stretch routines exactly the same each time as the very repetition and familiarity allows students to find the right mental state in which to rehearse. Having said that, it is always fun to add a few physical games to vary the routine and keep the mood buoyant. Here are a few suggestions. Some require both physical and mental stamina.

Points of the Compass

Designate each side of the room as points on the compass, North, South, East and West. When you shout a point the students must run to it.

Variations:

- around the world – run clockwise around the room;
- end of the world – play dead.

Port and Starboard

The sides of room become parts of a ship, Port, Starboard, bow, stern. You call – pupils run.

Variations:

- man overboard – run to the sides;
- man the rigging – pretend to climb;
- scrub the deck – pretend to scrub;
- hit the deck – play dead.

Cat and Mouse

Every student has a partner and hold hands (or wrists) except two students who remain un-attached. Designate one as the cat and one as the mouse. The cat chases the mouse but the mouse, if they wish, can escape by holding the hand/wrist of someone who is already in a couple. The person in the couple whose hand isn't being held becomes

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the mouse so has to let go of his/her partner's hand and try to escape the cat. If the cat does catch the mouse they can swap roles.

Good Morning

Each student has to say 'Good morning' and shake the hands of all the other students while keeping the other hand shaking someone else's hand – only when both hands are occupied in handshaking can the student disengage and find someone else.

Blob

Students spread out in a defined area. One student is chosen as 'The Blob'. At the teacher's command 'The Blob' tries to tag (i.e. touch) the others. Once a person is tagged they attach themselves to 'The Blob' and become part of it. This continues until everyone is part of 'The Blob'. Encourage students to attach themselves in ways other than simply holding hands, the more 'Blob'-like the creature becomes, the more fun.

Once the game is over play it again but emphasise the teamwork and co-operation aspects and encourage your students to discuss tactics that will help when hunting as 'The Blob' or trying to avoid being assimilated by 'The Blob'. This will also move focus away from who was 'The Winner' and who was 'The Loser'.

Variation

The same as above but with everyone blindfolded. Stress the importance of moving slowly and stealthily and encourage your students to start relying on senses other than sight alone as they hunt or attempt avoidance. Once everyone is blindfold, touch your 'Blob' on the shoulder and then give the command for the game to start. As people feel themselves being tagged they silently join 'The Blob'.

Silent Terror or Snake in the Dark

Another slight variation on 'The Blob'. Spread your students out around the space and ask them to close their eyes. Then ask them to walk around the room with eyes shut. Select one student to be the snake or 'The Silent Terror'. They try to catch the others. If they are the snake they must hiss so that their prey can listen and try to avoid them. If they are the 'The Silent Terror', they make no sound at all but the others must whisper 'Silent Terror' whenever they touch someone else. If there is no reply then they have been caught by the Silent Terror. The person who is caught must join the back of the monster (hold onto waist of the last caught person). If the monster is the snake, victims must join the back when they have been hissed at!