

# Summary of techniques for experiential learning and developing spirituality with the Theatre of Learning

- **To aid memory and understanding**

**Multi sensory environment** using artefacts music fabric candles shells water plants and flowers Eg creating a simple, attractive display to boost mood and memory.

**Using music** to come into to lift the mood or create atmosphere, change the mood , mark transitions , accompany and time written activities. To calm and soothe

- **To develop spirituality**

**Religion neutral exercises** - to parallel whatever part of the tradition you are studying – Eg sharing bread and water in a circle to understand the meaning of the eucharist. Writing special thoughts and putting it into a box to understand Jewish prayer. Thinking about regrets and letting them go.( use pebbles, stones or rice paper placed in water.) Thinking about things that need changing healing or mending ( writing them down adds a participatory symbol making the effect more powerful , see below)

**Participatory symbols** – actions the pupils do in a lesson, often as part of a religion neutral exercise, to deepen their understanding and the spiritual effect of the exercise. Eg lighting a candle for someone they are thinking about or have lost. Putting regrets into a stone.Eating apples and honey to remember Rosh Hashanah

**Confidential feelings visualisations** - to give pupils space and time to imagine in private what they might do and how they might feel or react in certain situations and dilemmas and to imagine what it might be like to do the right thing.

**Anonymous thought sharing circle** – Writing down how one felt and what one did following a confidential feelings visualisation on paper which is placed in the middle of the room .each pupil picks one to read out anonymously, or the teacher takes them away for evaluation and feedback or to feedback generally to the class. Provides positive peer pressure, most people do the right thing!

- **Storytelling**

**Mind movies** – take pupils on a journey through time or to another part of the world, describing what they see, Eg looking at the development in ideas about god from animism to monotheism. Looking at the development of capitalism from Neanderthals hunting to survive through the medieval age, the development of the industrial revolution and the exploitation of the developing world.

**Illustrating an abstract concept or set of ideas** – eg the Island and the Castle in the clouds

**Writing a futuristic science fiction story** to parallel the life of a founder, asking pupils to finish the story helps them understand and empathise with what might seem alien or difficult ideas

**Going into role** to describe the life of someone very different from ourselves to develop empathy eg poverty, refugees.

**What's in the bag**

Taking artefacts and objects out of a bag as you tell a story to help the class remember the characters and what happened eg Svetakakatu and the salt from the Upanishads. The story of Esther for Purim which is complex and with many characters.

Using facts, words, sums of money in envelopes taken out of a bag to deliver statistics. Creates interest and intrigue, time to think allows facts to have an impact.

Whats in the box – Use small decorated boxes, chests to contain something important to involve and intrigue pupils – what is in it ? A feeling, a situation, a sum of money, a person.

**Ceremony in a bag** - great for moving classrooms. Pack artefacts

and costumes pictures flashcards in a bag or box and take them out as you describe the festival and rite of passage creating the sabbath table as you talk. Or a display to show each part of the rite of passage .Incorporate a religion neutral exercise of participatory symbol for an easy, engaging, multi sensory lesson. Can be done to music. Put Keywords or the aim on A3 to blu tak to the board - or get the pupils to do it.

- **Assessment for Learning**

**True/false exercises** - great as a starter or plenary. Read out a series of statements pupils vote with cards or even hands. Test spelling vocab and facts. Follow up answers with questions to stretch the more able and extend the learning.

**Traffic lights** . - great for plenaries .Read out a series of debateable issues .Pupils vote with coloured cards as to whether they agree disagree or are not sure. Invite pupil s to justify their opinion. Involves everyone. Gives shy pupils a voice. Allows time to think and change ones mind. All opinions can be heard .Prepares for evaluation questions at GCSE.

**Vocabulary on flashcards** with definition on the back. Great for starters or plenaries .revision and group work. Pinning up round the room.

**Cloze procedure** great for revision and starters. Checking facts and vocab quickly for all abilities.

**Levelled writing frames and essays.**

Begin with describing the activities done in class so everyone feels secure. Put basic knowledge in the beginning up to level four and five so every pupil learns that . Extend up to level eight using the experiential work to help pupils evaluate, compare and contrast ,show development through history. Build in research, the use of textbooks, extension reading and the use of quotation.

The Theatre of Learning was born out of an assumption that no - one *wanted to know* what I *had* to tell them and what ever it was it had *nothing to do with them*. Experiential, multi sensory learning means

that the way they have encountered, learned and engaged with the topic, thinking, feeling, seeing, empathising and imagining is what will motivate them to read, write and research and extend their levels. They will be pushing themselves because they have a desire to know and find out. They will approach text already confident in their knowledge and understanding.