



Drama (Strategies for Teaching and Learning Professional Library)

Paul G. Heller

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'Eeeeck, drama, yikes, it's so much work, it's so noisy and exhausting, and disorganized. Couldn't I just avoid it?'

“Nope. It's here already. It's entered your classroom. It's inside your students. It explodes every minute. Admit it: your class is a major melodrama.

This lively beginning sets the scene for a teacher-friendly guide to classroom drama. *Drama as a Way of Knowing* will not only inspire K–12 teachers, it will encourage administrators and teacher educators to explore the learning role drama might play in their work as well.

Paul Heller, an experienced teacher, playwright, and producer, will convince and assure you that drama is already a part of your classroom. He explains how you can harness that dramatic energy and use it as an effective learning tool.

When is the best time to use drama in the classroom? Heller answers: use drama when you want students to:

- engage in the process of feeling, physically and emotionally, what it's like to be someone or something;
- make creative choices about how they use and present what they have learned;
- involve an audience-to create empathy, discussion and understanding;
- predict outcomes, make hypotheses, synthesize knowledge, account for ambiguity, and engage in a range of higher level critical thinking.

Drama can become an effective part of all classroom learning, and Paul shows how to use it effectively. While making it clear you don't need previous dramatic training or experience, he presents the nuts and bolts of pantomime and improvisation, of writing and acting scenes, even creating and presenting large-scale productions.

He also presents management and organization tips. Through his Ten-Step Process in which you, the teacher, are the director, he shows what you should do to guide your students through rewarding dramatic experiences.

Drama is a wonderful learning tool that enables students to access and explore the curriculum in ways that promote deeper thinking. And, as you will find, it's great fun as well!

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