

Title: **Using Stage Craft to Develop Academics and their Teaching Practice in Higher Education**

Presenter: **Maren Thom**
Queen Mary University of London

Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will:

- Be able to describe how drama methodologies can aid in developing teaching in HE.
- Be able to communicate into how the physical effect of dramatic methods can change self-perception as a teacher.
- Identify and define the key terms and components related to stage work in the classroom
- Identify and explain the relevance of how the space teachers in HE are using in teaching and presentation situations can be utilised dramatically and more effectively for the purposes of teaching and learning.

Session Outline

The relationship between acting and teaching is profound. The overlapping concepts of performance, projection, embodiment, narrative and entertainment influence greatly our understanding of the roles of teaching and researcher – both roles come together in the academic as the persuasive conveyor of new ideas. Murray & Lawrence (1980) already looked at the effects of drama lessons for teaching staff as a means of improving teaching quality at university. They suggested already forty years ago that the acting lessons had great effect on teaching by focusing on ‘non-cognitive skills’. (p.88) Lately the concept of ‘Teacher Identity’ has become a main focus in the field of developing teaching skills. Here the use of drama methods has been developed to explore the greater potential of the teacher as performer to tap into this idea of teaching persona. (see Özmen, K. S., 2010). This practical workshop is designed to give academic staff an introduction to different new approaches using drama methods to bring together teaching and academic practice. This is supplemented and structured with the findings of my research on drama methods for Equational Development.

The aim is to provide attendees with an introduction in how drama methods can be used and which prerequisite are needed. Then they will be part of a practical session where we start practicing drama methods as well as bring awareness to how teaching and presentation of research can be improved by dramatic training.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

The session will start with a 30 minute introduction to my research, the outline, purpose and reception and overall outcomes of the workshops. This is followed by a one hour active session in which I will introduce how stagecraft lessons, i.e. the technical aspects of performance, can create a new understanding of physical awareness when teaching, with presentations and other public performances. By looking at how to use a stage, from questions of intimacy and distance to blocking (where to be on stage), sightlines and gestures we will be focusing on the idea of 'how to be on stage'. This is followed by a short introduction into voice training and how it will benefit teachers, public speakers but also those teachers who, like me, have English as a second language.

References

Murray, H., & Lawrence, C. (1980). Speech and Drama Training for Lecturers as a Means of Improving University Teaching. *Research in Higher Education*, 13(1), 73-90. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40194933>

Özmen, K. S. (2010). Fostering Nonverbal Immediacy and Teacher Identity through an Acting Course in English Teacher Education. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 35 (6)

Drama for Teaching and Working in Academia:
<https://academicdevelopment.qmul.ac.uk/educational-development/teaching-and-learning-events/drama-for-teaching-and-working-in-academia/>, Monday, 30 July 2018