



Secondary School in Fife offering new Drama provision to S6 pupils

Choice of Unit

Our school has been delivering *Preparation for Audition* to a small group of S6 pupils. The reason for choosing this particular Unit was to facilitate learning and allow a greater opportunity for supported self-study. Due to staffing constraints, it was not possible to offer a full course or a timetabled Unit of work. This Unit also offers a good progression route for pupils who have studied Higher Drama, as it demands a greater amount of personal research and develops the use of communication skills with outside agencies (ie research into career opportunities). Both of these skills will be essential to them in their further education or careers paths. Furthermore, *Preparation for Audition* also offers progression in performance terms for those pupils who have completed the Higher Drama Course in that it allows them more artistic input and control over their final performance pieces.

A small group of S6 pupils were suited to this Unit as they had flexibility in their timetables and had a proven record of commitment which allows for a high proportion of the Unit to be supported self-study, which is appropriate at this stage in a pupil's high school career. The organisation of the teaching of the Unit has been arranged around the free periods that the S6 pupils have in order to get enough contact time with them. Each pupil has successfully passed Higher Drama in S5 and therefore has a lot of experience of rehearsal, direction and performance albeit in a group situation rather than solo performance.

Delivery of Unit

We began the *Preparation for Audition* Unit with detailed discussion on the opportunities for employment in the entertainment industry, highlighting the aspect that not every 'job' will be a formal acting one. The pupils were then given the task of researching job opportunities mainly using the internet, although we did point them in the direction of *The Stage* and *Television Today* which has an employment section at the back.

At first they concentrated on theatre companies (many have websites which include details of the companies' audition process and when auditions are held) but we directed them to extend their search more to include opportunities like festivals, industry-based role play, general entertainment (Pontins, Butlins, Warners, etc), theatre in education companies, etc.

The pupils then had to focus on five areas and contact the companies to find out detailed information about job opportunities and the preparation needed for these. Once it was established that the pupils would like to focus on theatre work we set about making decisions on which performance pieces they should choose for specific and general auditions. The pupils had to research several areas including audition books and articles by performers about auditions.

Once this work was complete we began the process of choosing appropriate pieces. The pupils had to choose pieces and then come back to me with a rationale for the particular pieces taking into account things like: skills required, current ability, potential employers' needs and the contrast of the pieces to showcase the best of their skills. Once the pieces were agreed, they began to prepare their performance and provide me with regular updates for constructive feedback. We have also encouraged the pupils to share their work with each other especially as the Unit is not timetabled.

National Progression Awards

Our school is planning to offer the National Progression Award (NPA) in Professional Theatre Preparation as it is most appropriate for our student cohort. We will be offering the NPA to both S5 and S6 pupils. We will be delivering the Unit *Drama: Acting Skills* as the optional Unit and developing/refining the strategies and format used with the current S6 group in order to deliver the mandatory Unit *Preparation for Audition* to a larger group.

Depending upon the success of next year's cohort we would like to expand the choice of NPAs for 2011/12 to include Acting and Performance (specifically for those who have completed the Professional Theatre Preparation NPA) to enable further opportunity for progression in the field of theatre and performance.