

ACT OUT NEWS

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS FORUM THEATRE WORKSHOPS

Create and perform a Forum Play!

Participants will learn about character, story-telling and improvisation while expressing through drama!!

WHERE: Blue Room Theatre, James St, Northbridge

WHEN: Mon 12 – Fri 16 June

TIME: 10 – 5 pm

COST: \$290 including morning and afternoon tea

AGE: 15 – 18

BENT OUT OF SHAPE

3 hour workshop for practitioners working with tough issues

WHERE: PTO Conference, Austin, Texas

WHEN: Sunday 6 June,

TIME: 10 – 1 pm

Forum Theatre's Positive Impact on Self-esteem & Conflict Resolution

In the last newsletter I wrote that Forum Theatre is the creation and performance of a play dealing with particular issues pertinent to the audience and its community. The play does not have a conclusion; instead, scenes portray the various struggles faced by the protagonist. The play is performed once right through; then it is performed again, this time 'spect-actors' from the audience can stop a scene if they think they could offer the protagonist alternatives that would have better results. The 'spect-actor' is then invited on stage to perform their suggestion. With this in mind picture this short scene in a play:

A salesperson has trouble resolving a customer's problem with a mobile phone. The customer does not have the time to wait for the administrative steps necessary to replace the faulty phone. The shop assistant is growing more and more frustrated – he wants to do the best for the customer but must follow protocol.

The spect-actors getting up on stage to replace the frustrated salesperson in trying to positively influence the client are also not having much luck. The client is not happy and wants a result NOW.

This is one of the scenes performed in a project, **Communication and Conflict Resolution in Working Life**, conducted by theatre practitioner Rikke Gjørnum and psychologist Gro Ramsdal between 2005 & 2006. The project combined the Forum Theatre pedagogy with Psychological Dialogue Analysis to train employees from 5 regional industrial enterprises from a variety of sectors. These included transportation, mobile phones and electronics, petroleum, logistics and manufacturing. The goal was to measure the success of using these tools in improving self-esteem and responding to conflict by developing more positive communication strategies.

Participants used real event from their working lives,

creating 23 dramatisations which fell under 4 different themes.

The practitioners established a context for participants to analyse conversations – for this project it was that the maintenance of **self-esteem and the protection of identity** are key components in communication.



This forum play, created during a recent Thirdway Theatre workshop treated the issue of discrimination and being true to yourself

The customer, participants were reminded was buying the phone for his wife, 'his identity as coping husband could be threatened is he failed to buy her a proper gift...', moreover, he would also have to deal with his self-talk about the reaction his wife might have. When the spect-actors returned to the stage their new interventions reflected a 'new identification with and understanding of the customer's problem'. Solutions that involved how he might take care of his wife were now offered too.

Read more about this project in next week's blog (6/6) on www.actout.com.au/blog

CAPTURING IDEAS – out of the blue or with intent?

We get ideas all the time, sometimes they come out of the blue, but often, they have to be carefully and intentionally captured.

There are many tools for generating ideas, one of my favourites is SCAMPER.

I came across SCAMPER in Michael Michalko's, **Thinkertoys**, a 'must-have' book if you are serious about innovation. You can also google SCAMPER and see for yourself.

SCAMPER was created by Bob Eberle who combined a set of characteristics found in most innovations. SCAMPER assumes that most new ideas are modified versions of old ones. SCAMPER is an acronym, each letter representing a way of rethinking certain aspects of the existing challenge.

We only have to look at some objects from our daily lives to find that one of the following was used in its creation:

S – Substitute – What can be substituted?

e.g., a lot of coffee shops have substituted cow's milk for soy milk and created the soy latte. Do you use travel agents or book and buy flights and hotels direct from the Internet?

C – Combine – What ideas can be combined?

e.g., my latest asset is a combination of an iPod, a mobile phone and the Internet, yes! I have recently got an iPhone! Last year I bought a head torch; combination of headband and a torch.

A – Adapt – What is it like? e.g., when was the last time you saw a cyclist stop her bike to unscrew the lid off a water bottle? The squirt top has made drinking on the go easy. And what about the fabulous neck cushions for sleeping on airplanes?

M – Magnify/Minify – What can be made bigger/smaller? e.g., have a look at your camera today and think back to the camera you had in the 80s! Big difference! And what about your television?

P – Put to other uses – What else can it be used for? e.g. who has not seen a tyre turned into a swing? Or a shoe as a doorstep? Or books for pressing flowers?

E – Eliminate – What can be removed? e.g., we have wireless access to Internet and I can't wait to buy a wireless mouse and a wireless printer.

R – Rearrange (Reverse) – How can it be rearranged? e.g. nowadays we are more likely to pay for photocopies first then make them.

These are just some quick examples that I came up with for this article but if you think about your own life, how many objects or processes can you think of that have undergone one of the SCAMPER modifications to be what they are today?

The way to use it is to clearly state your challenge or area you need ideas in. Then, ask questions relating to each of the SCAMPER characteristics to generate new ideas or solutions. Try this website for more questions relating to each characteristic. <http://litemind.com/scamper/>

Creativity Activity - Storytelling

Do you want to do something creative? I have recently done this and had a lot of fun!

1. Take your digital camera (I hope you have one!) and give yourself an hour to walk around your town centre, your suburb, your favourite shopping centre, a park, a car park, or even your office.
2. Without giving it too much thought take 15 to 20 photos and straight away upload them onto your computer.
3. When you have a full hour to spare open them up and place them in the order you like on a blank word document.
4. Next to each picture insert a text box.
5. Without censoring yourself (that means you do not listen to any little voice in your head that says "that's stupid/silly/lame" or "are you kidding?" or "that doesn't make any sense") write whatever comes to mind about that photo. Write **ANYTHING**, you can edit later! Write for the full hour – do not take toilet breaks, water breaks or texting breaks!
6. Leave it for a week.
7. Edit – without breaks for ½ hour.
8. Repeat steps 6 & 7. Enjoy!

