

DRAMA — THEATRE IN EDUCATION (TIE) - KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER

What is Theatre in Education (TIE)?

Theatre in Education (TIE) is theatre created for a **particular age group or specific target audience**. The aim of Theatre in Education is to **educate the audience about a topic, issue or debate** – while also entertaining them and inspiring them. TIE can also bring stories from history or literature to life.

How Theatre in Education Started

The ground-breaking TIE movement was pioneered in 1965 by the **Belgrade Theatre Company** in Coventry. It was developed for young people and used theatre and drama to create a range of **learning opportunities for young people to explore political, ethical and moral issues** in a safe environment. Actor-teachers from the Belgrade Theatre Company would **tour local schools** where they would **perform short pieces of theatre and lead workshops** that allowed students to **explore important issues and ideas in active and creative ways**. The target audience isn't always school-aged. Present day the company also put on plays which explore shared heritage and religion.

Other Famous TIE Companies

Founded in 1982 **Big Brum** is another famous TIE company. They are based in the West Midlands and they run educational programmes which **tour primary, secondary and other educational settings**. Big Brum works across all ages, backgrounds and abilities, using theatre and drama to **help young people make meaning of their lives and the world around them**.

The **National Trust** is not only Europe's **largest conservation charity**, it also runs an award winning schools programme led by experienced facilitators and theatre practitioners, with workshops, plays and interactive drama for primary and secondary students.

Forum Theatre

Augusto Boal (a Brazilian Theatre Director) developed 'Forum Theatre' during the 1960s. He understood how Theatre could be a powerful tool to educate and empower people to make changes to their current situation.

Forum Theatre is best described as interactive Theatre. One of the characters in the play or scene has some kind of dilemma or problem that they are trying unsuccessfully to overcome. Audience members are allowed to stop the action and make suggestions as to what the character could do. The scene is replayed several times with different audience members' suggestions being tried until the problem is successfully overcome. Forum Theatre developed further when Boal invited a female member of the audience onstage to show the actor what she wanted to be acted out. This was because she became so frustrated and angry with an actor who did not understand her suggestion. This event led to the birth of the spect-actor!!!!

"Theatre is a form of knowledge; it should and can also be a means of transforming society. Theatre can help us build a future, rather than just waiting for it." Augusto Boal

Key Features of Theatre in Education

- **Target Audience** — Who the play is aimed at e.g. different school year groups, university students, car drivers, the Elderly, young offenders, prisoners.
- **A Relevant Topic** — Something sensitive that could effect the Target Audience.
- **A Strong Message** — A clear aim and educational objective running throughout. TIE often explores issues from various viewpoints, so we can see the effect of an action upon a range of people.
- **Educational Information** — The inclusion of facts and figures to educate the audience.
- **Small Versatile Casts** — TIE tours between venues and is low budget so actors must multirole, operate technical equipment and sometimes play musical instruments.
- **Costume** — The costumes are simple and symbolic/representational, especially if actors have to multi-role.
- **Basic Set & Props**— The production design must be portable so the design must be simple and representational/symbolic.
- **Basic Lighting and Sound** — Often TIE companies use the venues house lights but some companies tour with a small portable lighting rig.
- **Audience Participation** — The audience are often spoken to directly (breaking the fourth wall) and asked to participate in parts of the performance — there is often a workshop after the show.
- **Forum Theatre** — A form of audience participation developed by Augusto Boal where the audience can suggest ways to change the outcome of the performance.
- **Balance between Theatre & Education** — One of the hardest things in TIE is finding the right balance between the theatrical experience and educating the audience.
- **Visual elements** — Use of Projectors/PowerPoint/Placards to emphasise the message.
- **Episodic** - Smaller scenes that can stand alone.
- **Use of Narrator/Narrating** — A storyteller. It could be someone who lives outside the world of the play or a character in the story.
- **Direct Address** — Characters acknowledge and talk to the audience, often asking for their advice.
- **Multi-roling** — Actors playing more than one part.
- **Stereotypes** — Characters in TIE are often stereotypical (caricatures) in order to make an immediate point to the audience.
- **Monologue** — A continuous uninterrupted speech by one actor. It could be to another actor or the thoughts of the character said aloud.
- **Movement & Physical Theatre** — Mime, physical theatre and movement work are often favoured over naturalism.
- **Music & Dance** — Music is a great way of quickly creating the correct atmosphere and dance is popular in TIE with younger target audiences.

Steps to Devising a piece of TIE

1. Decide on the **target audience**
2. Decide on the **topic** of the scene
3. Agree the **key message/educational information**
4. **Research** the topic
5. **Setting**— Consider where the play takes place
6. **Write/devise** the **scene/play**
7. **Audience participation**
8. **Evaluation**