



CASSANDRA
SOCALLY ENGAGED STORYTELLING

CASSANDRA MASTERCLASS PLANNING TEMPLATE

SESSION TITLE: Evoke Space - We Are Bodies

SESSION LENGTH: 2 hours

LED BY: Shona Cowie

SESSION OVERVIEW: I believe storytelling is a full-body experience and too often we treat it as if its only a verbal one coming from a disembodied mind. Come to think about it, I think wetreat mind and body as separate in most of our lives and I think this rubbish! Through a brief theoretical discussion and lots of practical exercises, apprentices, will develop movement techniques to reunite their mind and body and tell storis through the senses. We will learn about the physicality of the 7 archetypes and tricks and tips to clean up your gestures and mime to make the story images clear in the audiences minds eye.

SESSION AIMS:

To explore storytelling as a **fully embodied practice**, reconnecting mind and body.

To develop participants' awareness of how **movement, breath, and physical presence** shape storytelling.

To introduce practical techniques from mime and physical theatre (inspired by Jacques Lecoq) to create **clear images, objects, and actions**.

To enable storytellers to **evoke space and atmosphere physically**, allowing audiences to feel the world of the story.

To explore the **physicality of archetypes** and how embodying them can transform character and narrative.

To build confidence in using the body to **enhance clarity, expression, and audience connection**.

To support participants in integrating these skills into their **own storytelling practice**.

REQUIRED MATERIALS: Chairs, Music Devise and music



EXERCISE	DESCRIPTION (Step by Step)	PURPOSE/DESIRED OUTCOME	TIME (90 mins total)
Introduction	<p>Introduce yourself as facilitator and background in the area. Reassure the participants that, even if they don't consider themselves physical or a mover, they have a body and so this is the right workshop for them.</p> <p>Have a quick check in and test the water to see how everyone feels.</p>	Participants feel safe, included, and reassured . They begin to relax and understand the frame of the workshop , creating comfort and readiness.	10
One Word Collective Poem	<p>In a circle, one at a time share a word that comes to mind when they say body.</p> <p>Facilitator will record and share back the words as if they are a poem, acting as a piece of creative work created early on and a quick temperature check picture of how the group feel about the concept of body. We will repeat this at the end to see how it changes.</p>	Builds group connection and creative ownership . Creates a snapshot of current attitudes towards the body to revisit later	5
Physical Warm Up	<p>Roll the shoulders back and down and exhale deeply, even let out a sigh. X 3</p> <p>Gentle neck rolls, and stretches, roll gently down the spine letting your head hang.</p> <p>Rub your hands together then with some energy rub your body, like you are applying bath foam reaching as many places as possible.</p>	Participants become physically present, grounded, and energised . They begin to understand storytelling as embodied and sensory , not just visual or verbal.	10



	<p>Close eyes and feel this awakened body, the movement in you. The stories you are carrying. Breath deeply.</p> <p>Eyes open. Pump your feet, push them into the ground one at a time, like you are pedaling, find a rhythm. Keep going.</p> <p><i>Explain; In storytelling we talk about mental pictures, images, the ones in your mind as the teller and the ones the audience sees. This is useful and powerful, helpful to build clear narratives. But there is additional way to think of it, pictures are 2d and primarily about the visual, what about stories that are not just seen but felt. This is about space and atmosphere experienced with the whole body</i></p> <p>Stretch arms out to the vertical, the horizontal, all the 3d planes they can reach. Move fingers independently</p> <p><i>Explain; In a story if a character grasps an icicle the audience understands that not because they have seen it but because at someppoin in their own lives they have grasped an icicle, and their body and senses remember the physcial sensation. If they have never grasped an icicle its even more remarkable as their body can imagine what that feels like based on a collection of similar experiences.</i></p>		
Basic Mime Technique	Ask participants to work with a simple invisible object—a cup, a stone, a letter—but begin <i>before</i> they touch it. They should pause and allow the body to register the object’s presence: noticing it,	Participants learn to create clear, believable objects through intention and timing. They understand that attention and	15



	<p>deciding to reach for it, letting intention build in the breath and posture. Then they interact with it as simply as possible. After placing it down, they must also stay with the <i>after</i>—how the body responds once the object is gone. Does the hand linger? Does the weight remain? Has something changed?</p> <p>Move through the technique of showing an empty hand before grabbing the object and again after releasing it, it is the before and after that make the thing come to life.</p> <p>Choose an object from a story they are working on, how will the interact with it? Repeat the exercise with a partner observing. The focus is not on the action itself, but on whether the object gains significance through these transitions. Invite feedback around this: <i>When did the object feel real? Was it clear before it was touched? Did it continue to exist after it was put down?</i> This helps storytellers understand that in mime, it's not the handling alone, but the attention around the action that brings the invisible to life.</p>	<p>transitions bring meaning, not just action.</p>	
Evoking Space	<p>Invite participants to walk freely around the room in a neutral state. Then begin to call out different environments: a low-ceilinged cave, a vast open moor, a dense forest, a narrow corridor, a stormy shoreline. Without miming objects, they allow the <i>space itself</i> to change their body—how they hold themselves, where their focus goes, how they move through it. Do they shrink, expand, slow down, become cautious, or open up? The key is that the body responds <i>before</i> any conscious “acting.”</p>	<p>Participants learn to embody space physically, allowing the audience to sense environment without explanation. They develop awareness of how space shapes movement.</p>	20



	<p>After exploring a few spaces, ask them to pause and reflect or work in pairs. One person moves through an imagined space while the other watches and names what they see: <i>What kind of place is this? What tells you that?</i> This helps storytellers understand that space is not something they describe—it's something they embody, and when the body truly responds, the audience can sense the world without it being explicitly shown.</p> <p>Experiment with Charades and spaces in their stories.</p>		
Archetypes	<p>Mark out a simple “neutral” space- the “the storyteller”. One by one, participants step into it in a neutral body—relaxed, balanced, without character. Then call out an archetype (e.g. hero, trickster, elder, child, ruler, lover, outcast). As they step forward again, they allow the archetype to enter the body first—not through acting, but through physical shifts: where is the weight? How does the spine sit? Is the movement direct or indirect, heavy or light, bound or free? Encourage them to exaggerate at first, letting the whole body commit before refining.</p> <p>Once they’ve explored a few archetypes, invite them to move through the space, noticing how each one changes the world around them. The hero might open space and create direction; the trickster might fragment it; the elder might slow and deepen it. In pairs, one moves while the other observes and reflects: <i>What kind of world appeared? What changed in the space?</i> This helps storytellers experience that by physically referencing an archetype,</p>	Participants understand archetypes as physical energies . They gain skill in clear characterisation, transformation, and dynamic storytelling .	20



	<p>they are not just changing themselves—they are reshaping the entire imaginative landscape for the audience.</p> <p>In pairs practice flicking between characters and narrators, playing with different characters.</p>		
Share back	<p>Invite the participants to play with the new techniques in a story they have been working on and share a few of these back to the group</p>	<p>Integrates learning into practical storytelling and builds confidence using the body in performance.</p>	10
New Body Poem	<p>Repeat the list poem exercise and see how their feelings and relationship to body has changed.</p>	<p>Participants recognise a shift in their relationship to their body and leave with a sense of closure and reflection.</p>	10