



Let's get talking – Creating political debates through drama

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Workshop for Five Nations Network Conference 2018

**Aims:**

- *Explore a variety of ways to engage people in debate*
- *Explore the challenges of getting people, especially those less confident or able, to engage in debates*
- *Explore how to guide conversations from personal to broader political issues*
- *Explore empowerment of participants to make them have ownership of the themes of the debate*
- *How to you enable a genuine shift to take place?*
- *How do we instigate people with a variety of abilities to engage in the debate?*

Exercise	Activity & Aims
<p><b>Introductions</b></p>	<p>What is Fio?</p> <p><i>Give people a chance to understand the company and its work.</i>  <a href="http://www.wearefio.co.uk">www.wearefio.co.uk</a></p> <p><i>Also Abdul's work with National Theatre Wales and the Assembly Programme, Democratically Elected Performance Debate Events</i>  <a href="https://nationaltheatrewales.org/archive/assembly">https://nationaltheatrewales.org/archive/assembly</a></p> <p><i>Nicole's work with Young Identity and how poetry and creative writing can be used to support and enable young people to start thinking about issues which are of interest, or they are passionate about.</i>  <a href="http://youngidentity.org">http://youngidentity.org</a></p>
<p><b>Sun shines on</b></p>	<p>In a circle everyone sat, 1 fewer chairs than participants. Person without chair in the middle has to make a statement which is true about themselves</p> <p><i>e.g. 'The sun shines on anyone who likes football'</i></p> <p>All those who agree with statement or is true about them, have to swap chairs including person in the middle, the person left without a chair has to make the next statement.</p> <p>Aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting to know each other</li> <li>• Ice Breaker</li> <li>• Simple method to getting people to make statements about themselves</li> </ul>
<p><b>Free write</b></p>	<p>For 3 mins you have to write without stopping, anything that comes to mind in response to a stimulus or without, not allowed to stop:</p>

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	<p>For this workshop:</p> <p><i>'We are building walls when we should be building bridges.'</i></p> <p>Aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Free your mind</li><li>• Becoming more coherent with thoughts</li><li>• Allows for people to be creative</li><li>• Nothing is wrong attitude</li></ul>
<b>Vote on your feet</b>	<p>Set a scale – One end of room strongly agree and the other end strongly disagree.</p> <p>Make statement e.g. <i>'I love Marmite'</i> <i>'Because of Donald Trump we will have World War 3'</i></p> <p>Individually each person has to decide whether they agree or not and stand in the space in accordance, discuss after each statement giving people the chance to explain their choice. If people want to adjust based on others explanation – please allow them.</p> <p>Ask the group for statements they would like to put to the group- repeat process.</p> <p>Aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Get people talking</li><li>• Empower group to discuss issues which they may feel passionate about</li><li>• Choice are not final and shifts in thinking is possible</li></ul>
<b>Silent Debate</b>	<p>Think of 5 key skills that young people will need for the future. Write each on 5 separate pieces of paper make sure it is legible.</p> <p>Make sure any, which are repeated, are sorted so that only one is in the final exercise.</p> <p>Make a full list with most important to least important together as a group in complete silence- within 2 min rounds.</p> <p>The facilitator keeps reducing the list by taking 5-10 of the suggestions at the bottom of the list, at the end of each 2 min round.</p> <p>Aims</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Non verbal debate</li></ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Finding starting points for intriguing debates post exercise – Which was the hardest one to lose? Which one in particular did people want to fight for? Did it matter if their suggestions were at the top?</li></ul>
<b>Final thoughts and conversations</b>	Quick wrapping up Final questions and thoughts

Additional useful info:

*"Knowledge is not the filling of a bucket but the lighting of a fire."*

Times are changing and what we teach our young people and the skills they need to help them engage and become successful in the world is changing:

What are the key skills, which young people will need.....

### **Questioning**

"What is robotics used for?" "How can I use technology to remind me to do my homework every night?" The answers to these questions are now radically different to those, which were accepted five years ago. And, in the future, they will have changed even more.

Thriving in the future, then, requires not so much being handed the answers to today's problems and being trained to memorise them but, rather, providing a framework for asking the right questions in a fast-changing world.

In a world of information, **knowing the right answer is actually becoming far less important than knowing the right question to ask. Kids should know how to search, research and frame the question they are really asking.**

### **Resilience**

Nobody likes failing, but learning to identify deficiencies and improve upon them is becoming a vital skill. In traditional education, success often seems like a binary game of "fail" or "pass". We need to construct teaching as a narrative that encourages risk-taking, and helps pupils back up on their feet, to enable them to learn from trying things out in various different ways en route to enhanced understanding. That is what life is like.

Many kids have a fear of failure. But the kind of whirlwinds being swept up in the future global economy demand a recognition that continual improvements and changes of direction are necessary. That is why **project-based work which can make time for invention, iteration and enhancement can often be a better learning tool than having the one correct answer to a very specific question.**

### **Adaptability**

The tales of Kodak and Nokia, almost forgotten giants of their industries, tell us that being expert in a single fixed discipline undergoing large-scale disruption is precarious. But nothing is fixed any

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longer; disruption is the norm. We need the next generation not to have a rigid mind set or a fixed palette of tools at its disposal but, rather, to keep up with changes and to use everything available.

To achieve this, **we must expose our children to change – to teach that the range of things they are interested in or can take joy from is not a static or finite pool.** One day, you may be playing in goal; the next, on the wing. Both of these things are different, and are a unique challenge, but both can be just as rewarding and enjoyable. The player that learns to embrace switching gear is the one who will reap the rewards!

### **Creativity**

It is often said that children/ people lose their creativity in later years. We must not let that happen!

The application of creativity is not just an intangible, is not just about bringing play into adulthood. **What really defines creativity is an ability to think of ideas unencumbered by reasons they cannot or should not be executed.** In other words, blue-sky thinking.

Creativity is a permissiveness to engage in risk-taking that may not lead anywhere meaningful – but which may yet create an amazing outcome. Too often, we constrain things by immediately ruling out an idea or activity as unviable; in fact, we should not be killing momentum at the start, we should be encouraging permission to rule everything in and refine an idea along the way.

### **Problem Solving**

If your goal is simply to get an “A” in your tests, feeling connected to the task at hand can be challenging. That is why **the best way to learn can often be to feel a sense of investment.**

When we have a goal with a purpose, it is made real enough for us to care about the problem, the solution and the process in between. Who wouldn't be interested in finding a solution to an everyday problem they're experiencing – and finding it themselves? But your child's problem doesn't have to be personal, it could be societal: saving the whales, boosting local recycling or contributing to whatever cause they are interested in. When you identify a problem that you care about, setting out to solve it becomes meaningful enough that you enjoy the journey, are driven toward an outcome and will do whatever it takes to find the solution.

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