

Arts Centre Melbourne presents
Monkey Baa Theatre Company's

Pete the Sheep

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Foundation – Grade 2



Teacher Resource Materials

By Rachel Perry, 2013

Learning experiences for students from Early Stage 1 to Stage 2

Vision

VISION: To inspire young minds and excite the inner child

MISSION: Creating exceptional theatre experiences for young people by bringing to life uniquely Australian stories.

Monkey Baa Theatre Company

Established in 1997, Monkey Baa Theatre Company has carved itself a reputation for producing award-winning, outstanding theatre that is vibrant, through provoking, imaginative, relevant and sometimes downright silly. As Australia's largest touring theatre company we have performed in every state and territory across the country and have established strong and loyal audiences throughout each community.

Monkey Baa has a unique artistic niche. We adapt the very best of Australian children's literature for the stage. The common thread weaving through all our works, is a focus on the belief that young people's interests are valued and respected, that they are engaged in the performing arts through the telling of stories; that entertain, inspire and encourage a greater understanding of the world their place within it.

Monkey Baa has adapted, produced and toured:

1998/2012	The Bugalugs Bum Thief based on the book by Tim Winton
2000/2001	The Fairy's Wings based on the book by Gillian Rubinstein
2003	Worry Warts based on the book by Morris Gleitzman
2004	Sprung! based on the book by Andrew Daddo
2006	Hitler's Daughter based on the book by Jackie French
2008	Milli, Jack and the Dancing Cat based on the picture book by Stephen Michael King
2008	I Am Jack based on the book by Susanne Gervay
2009	Thursday's Child based on the novel by Sonya Hartnett
2010	FOX based on the picture book by Margaret Wild and Ron Brooks
2011/2013	Emily Eyefinger based on the books by Duncan Ball
2012/2013	Goodbye Jamie Boyd based on the verse novel by Elizabeth Fensham

The company has also produced and toured...

Wendy Harmer's **Pearlie in the Park** in 2005/2007

Alana Valentine's **The Prospectors** 2005

Pete the Sheep

Based on the popular book by Jackie French and Bruce Whatley

In *Pete the Sheep*, we meet a sheepdog with a difference. In that he is – err . . . a sheep. And this just doesn't sit right with the regular shearers at the shed. Things are done a certain way, you see – and we can't go having things out of the ordinary.

And Pete is definitely out of the ordinary. Owner shearer Shaun insists Pete is just as good as any old sheepdog – if not better. While dogs go 'arf arf', Pete simply goes 'baa baaaa', and the other shearers don't like it one little bit.

Brought to the stage in classic styles including the Barbershop Quartet, this is a truly timeless Aussie tale – from the iconic lingo to the names, to the shearers' blue singlets.

Pete the Sheep is guaranteed to delight young people aged 4 to 9 years.

Education Resources

A set of Education Resource materials has been developed to enhance attendance at this wonderful production. The materials include *pre-performance* and *post-performance* activities, focusing on the integration of creative arts in the classroom. The materials are designed to prepare students, engage and extend their thinking in regard to the performance and connect to a broader range of curriculum areas.

The teacher notes target students from Early Stage 1 to Stage 2. Specific adaptation suggestions have been made in the notes to tailor the activities for different age groups. The main body of activities are written as suitable for lower to middle primary school (years K-3). As the production is suitable for a wide range of ages and associated abilities, suggested adaptations for younger and older students are included where relevant. Teachers are encouraged to adapt these ideas for their specific curriculum area, student cohort and expectation for 'product' and outcomes. Due to the unique nature of this performance, teachers are encouraged to explore the wide variety of opportunities engagement with the themes can offer. Allowing students to explore individual response is also strongly encouraged.

Focusing primarily on engaging students in the production and story via the creative arts (drama, dance, music and visual art) as well as connecting with elements of English and the Personal Development component of PDHPE. Due to variations in curriculum documents for each state, broad curriculum areas only are referred to in this document rather than specific outcomes. Activities are presented in a step-by-step format allowing teachers with minimal or no experience in the arts to implement them successfully.

The key themes addressed within the production include:

- .. Uniqueness (Individuality and difference)
- .. Friendship/Mateship
- .. Identity

Technical aspects of the production are addressed including the place of sound, lighting and stagecraft.

Classroom management strategies for doing drama in the classroom have been included below to assist with the implementation of the suggested creative arts activities.

Classroom Management Suggestions for Drama

Drama, along with other areas of the creative arts, can be used to support learning through integration with a variety of key learning areas. Physical theatre and music can also be used to enhance classroom-based learning by giving students the opportunity to explore ideas and issues in different, expressive ways. Engagement in the creative arts has been considered to assist with the development of self-esteem, communication skills, problem-solving abilities and in the development of focus and team building through fun activities.

Incorporating drama and/or physical theatre in school classrooms presents a number of challenges for teachers. The following suggestions are designed to help support their inclusion and are intended as a guideline only.

When doing drama and/or physical theatre in the classroom:

- **ensure a clear workspace is available for the activity.** If desks cannot be moved in the classroom, try to use the hall or a contained outside open area.
- **talk to the students about the creation of a 'safe space'.** In this space students don't laugh at each other, but support and encourage (forming a circle at the beginning and end of a session or sitting with eyes closed are simple ways to focus students for a drama/physical theatre session)
- **always begin every session with a warm-up.** For physical theatre this should include a physical warm-up, but it is also helpful to begin with a focus/team building activity. For a drama session this could include a focus activity, drama game or pure physical warm-up.
- **incorporate a reflection session at the end of every drama activity.** This allows the students to consider what has been done and take more meaning away from the activity than it just being fun (which it will be!)
- **be firm with the students.** If a student does not follow instructions, they should be removed from the activity. This will allow the other students to see that you as the teacher are assisting in maintaining the safe space for them to work.
- **don't be afraid to participate in the activities yourself.** The students like to see you as the teacher taking a role in an activity. For drama, this can also allow you to help any improvisations or role-plays flow and move forward more easily. (Dorothy Heathcote's work on Mantle of the Expert and Teacher in Role discusses this in more detail).

If possible, conduct a 'risk assessment' with your class before embarking on any physical work. As a class it would be good to discuss the personal, group, physical, and psychological risks inherent in the working space. Together, the class could devise the measures that would help to minimise these risks. This collaboration would help the students to realise that physical work can actually be dangerous, and encourage them to take responsibility for themselves, the group, and the space in which they are working.

SECTION 1 – Pre-performance

The following two activities are designed for completion prior to attending a performance of 'PETE THE SHEEP'.

Introduction to 'PETE THE SHEEP'

Creative Arts

- Discuss the title of the production 'PETE THE SHEEP'.
- Brainstorm what the production may be about (ideas could be recorded on a large sheet of paper for later reference).
- Discuss their favourite animal and what it means to them.

NB If you wish to prepare the students for the 'storyline' of the production, read the picture book 'Pete the Sheep' by Jackie French and Bruce Whatley.

Year 2-3

- Identify key themes in the production: *identity, uniqueness (individuality and difference), friendship/matship*. Drawing on these themes, compile a list of what the production may be about. This list can be used for post-performance comparison.

Introduction to Performance

Creative Arts

- Elicit student past experiences of theatre performances.
- Discuss expectations in relation to being an audience member in this style of professional performance e.g. speaking during the performance, appropriate response during and at the conclusion and for younger students going to the bathroom before entering the theatre.
- Brainstorm differences between drama in the classroom and the 'drama' of theatre performance. Consider the difference between theatre performances versus television.
- Discuss links between theatre and storytelling e.g. that live theatre provides another medium for telling a story. Brainstorm other ways that stories can be told (books, radio, television, face to face etc)

Adaptation for older students – Explain to students that this production is a musical and has sheep dogs and sheep as key characters. Discuss how they might be represented on stage.

SECTION 2 – Post-performance

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION AND RESPONSE

General notes – evaluation activities

All evaluation/response activities could be conducted in small groups or as a whole class depending on the age of the students and the desired focus of the teacher.

Evaluation and Response to performance

Creative Arts

- Discuss student response to the performance considering themes and the personal impact.
- Engage students with their emotional response. How did they feel during the performance? How has that feeling changed since the performance finished? What was the highlight of the performance for them and was there anything they did not engage with?
- Consider the impact of the music, lighting and interactive aspects of the performance and the influence they have on their overall response? What would the performance have been like if any of the elements had been removed?

Written Representation of performance

Creative Arts, English

- Write a review of the performance with language and structure appropriate to publishing in a newspaper.

NB It is important to discuss the style of writing appropriate for newspapers and/or provide students with some examples of theatre reviews as a model for their work.

- Publish the written reviews. Consider placing best reviews in the school newsletter or submitting them to the local paper.

Adaptation for Younger Students --- Collaboratively construct a review as a class.

Visual Representation of performance

Creative Arts, English

- Create an artwork representing their emotional response to ‘PETE THE SHEEP’. A discussion considering colour, texture and shape in other artwork may assist less confident students to engage with this task.

NB Students should be encouraged to plan their work (design) and use multi-media materials where possible.

- Explain each artwork to the class justifying style and choice of materials. Discuss how personal response to the performance influenced their artwork.

Performance Narrative

Creative Arts, English

- Elicit meaning of the terms ‘narrative’/‘story’. Discuss the narrative/story of ‘PETE THE SHEEP’ and that the show was adapted from the picture book. Read to students the book by Jackie French and Bruce Whatley if available.
- Brainstorm the key ‘story’ elements in ‘PETE THE SHEEP’ e.g. Orientation, complication etc. Was the narrative clear or did it require the whole performance to then understand the story in hindsight? If this was the case, how did this either assist to engage the audience or in turn distract the audience?
- Consider how the live production may have been similar or different to the picture book. Why would Monkey Baa have made changes during their adaptation process? E.g. inclusion of songs, references to mobile phones, new characters or events etc What impact did these changes make to the overall story and their response to the story/characters

Narrative --- Storyboard

- Discuss with students the concept of a storyboard – series of images/words to represent a storyboard
- Students to individually/or in pairs create a storyboard to represent what they think happens after the conclusion of the story they saw for the characters in ‘PETE THE SHEEP’. Students can be instructed to consider multiple scenes or just the next one depending on their age, ability and experience with similar tasks.
- In developing the storyboard, students could be shown pictorial books such as those by Jeanie Baker --- http://www.jeanniebaker.com/picture_books_index.htm that tell a story in pictures only. Students should be encouraged to storyboard using a variety of media including sketch, paint, computers, photographs, mosaic and present their storyboard using cartoon elements, stylised drawings and/or words. Present completed storyboards, display in the room or collate as a class book.
- Students should be encouraged to consider new characters that might contribute to the story if desired. If already completed, responses to the questions in the ‘hotseating’ activity (Identity theme) may help them shape those involved in their storyboard.

Adaptation for Younger Students --- The storyboard creation of the next scene in the story may be difficult for very young students. If desired, the teacher could prepare in advance a series of images representing the existing narrative of ‘PETE THE SHEEP’ that students could then order either working in small groups or as a whole class activity. Subsequent tableaux activity would then need to be adapted.

Narrative – Tableaux or still image/role play

- Students need to work in small groups and select one of their storyboards to be a focus for this activity.
- Students should each select one of the ‘characters’ and scenes indicated in the storyboard and as a group physically recreate one of the images (tableaux/still

image). Selected tableaux/still images should then be shown to their class. The audience should have their eyes closed while each tableaux/still image is set up to allow a 'photograph' style experience. For multiple tableaux, eyes should be closed between each.

- If students are confident with the creation of tableaux/still image, they could work to recreate three key images from the storyboard that they feel demonstrate the next part of their story. Their classmates would then need to guess what is happening in the 'image'.

NB Students should be encouraged to consider the various 'elements of drama' when constructing their tableaux/still images – in particular *focus, space, contrast, symbol, mood, time* and *tension*.

- Storyboard tableaux/still images could be photographed and displayed either as picture books with accompanying text or alongside their storyboard inspiration.

Adaptation for older students – older students, or those more confident with drama, could extend this activity to include role-play where the story is 'acted out' based on the storyboard scenes.

Adaptation for younger students – teacher could co-construct each tableaux/still image with the whole class allowing modelling of the different elements in practice and allowing students to work in the role of 'director'.

Theatre Design/Technical Elements of performance (older students)

Creative Arts, Science and Technology

- Discuss the set used for the performance of 'PETE THE SHEEP'. How did it allow an audience to locate themselves in the country? How were the different locations represented? E.g Shearing Shed, Shaun's Sheep Salon, paddock etc
- Students select a favourite sequence in the performance considering any special or unusual effects required for that scene and discuss.
- Students develop a model set (using an open box as the theatre) for their selected scene/moment. Students should be encouraged to create their own and not reproduce the set from the production. If desired, student should be encouraged to follow correct design and make processes including planning their set and choosing materials prior to construction taking place.
- Students to explain their design to the class justifying their choices.

NB If the technology is available, students could be given the option to design their set using computer programs. Drawing programs could be used or more specialised software programs such as those found at <http://students.autodesk.com> This organisation provides student and professional versions of their products many of which are free.

THEMATIC EXPLORATION

Through the following explorations, students will be connecting with personal experiences and emotions. To allow for effective engagement in activities, it is important to establish a 'safe space' for all discussion and drama work. It is also important to conduct an effective warm-up as per 'Classroom Management Strategies' for all work involving physical activity.

The following activities will be engaging with the themes of the production:

- a) uniqueness (individuality and difference)
- b) friendship/mateship
- c) identity

General Thematic Overview

Creative Arts, English

- In class or small groups, students to discuss and report on the key themes within 'PETE THE SHEEP'. Aim to elicit the key themes of: *identity, uniqueness (individuality & difference), friendship/mateship* and *innovation (older students)*
- Record and discuss each of these themes in relation to the play (it may help to use a large sheet of paper to write brainstormed ideas on for each theme – these can be referred to later). Comparing the new ideas with those generated in the pre-performance activities would be an interesting exercise.
- Reflect on themes and how they may be played out in their lives and society in general today.

Uniqueness (individuality and difference)

Personal Development, English, Creative Arts

- Discuss with the students the various characters in the production and consider what was 'unique' or different about each.
- Elicit from students what they believe is referred to by the term 'uniqueness' and 'individuality'. Reflect on what is unique or different about each of the members of the class. Was it their actions, personality, looks or something else?
- Discuss with students how they might represent those differences through colours or shapes, eliciting examples.
- Students need to work in pairs and create a piece of art about their partner. The work of art, however is not of the way their partner looks, but to represent what is special or unique about them. Students should be encouraged to consider colour, line and shape when building their works of art and could use multi-media if available.
- Artworks should be displayed around the room with an accompanying statement describing positively the unique aspects of each student.

Adaptation for younger students – younger students could be encouraged to focus on only one aspect e.g. line or shape or colour rather than combining elements in their representations. Extra time spent discussing the relationship between the way they feel about their partner, what is unique and how they might represent that would be helpful.

Differences – Reporters (Extra activity for older students)

- “ Students should work in small groups to discuss the reactions from different characters to Pete and Shaun as partners as well as the establishment of ‘Shaun’s Sheep Salon’. Students can consider all the following characters or each group could be nominated one to discuss in detail and report back to the class. Characters considered could include Ratso, Big Bob, Bungo, Brute, Tiny, Fang, Sheep. Encourage students to focus on the emotional reaction the different characters had to meeting and working with Shaun and Pete and why that might have been e.g. feeling threatened, not liking change, lack of understanding etc
- “ Students should be told they are going to be interviewed in character by a local reporter about their reaction to Shaun and Pete and the new salon. Students work to prepare questions that encourage an exploration of ‘difference’ and each characters reaction

NB *This could be done as a ‘teacher-in-role’ activity or asking one of the students to volunteer as reporter.*

- “ As a class, encourage students to reflect on the different reactions articulated by various characters. Discuss how similar issues may be experienced in their classroom/school and what they can do to demonstrate tolerance and support of others.

Friendship/Mateship

Personal Development, English, Creative Arts

- “ Elicit from the students the friendship/mateship relationships revealed in the performance of ‘PETE THE SHEEP’. In particular consider the relationship and role of each shearer and their sheep dog/sheep sheep as well as to each other. What role did each take in assisting the audience to understand Shaun’s differences? How did their reactions allow us to understand elements of Pete and Shaun’s personalities as well as those of the other sheep dogs and shearers? How did the relationships change over the course of the production?
- “ Students should consider what the terms ‘friendship’ and ‘mateship’ mean to them. Students should record their ideas in small groups or as a whole class. How are those characteristics demonstrated through the characters in the production?
- “ Students are to select one of the key characters in the performance. Students need to imagine they are that character and discuss from the character’s perspective how it felt for them throughout the story. This could include Shaun’s feeling when told to leave and his feelings when his salon is a success as well as Ratso’s confusion when all the sheep leave and his feelings of being different when all the others embrace the new salon. Talking about the different feelings, and for older students considering parallels to real life experiences would be helpful.

- Students should then be encouraged to write a letter as their selected character to a distant relative talking about the future of the salon and their role in the ‘team’ moving forward.

Adaptation for older students – Encourage older students to set up a role-play news story (similar to 60 minutes or Australian Story). Students take on different characters including the journalist or interviewer, another shopkeeper in the town, Ratso, Big Bob, Tiny etc The experience can be improvised or scripted, but should focus on the feelings the different members have reflecting on the relationships that have developed between different characters in the story. Some role-play scenario examples may include:

- The first sheep shorn in the salon comes back to meet Pete and Shaun
- Shearers/Shاون talking about their favourite hairstyles and describing how each is done
- Australian Story episode including a sequence of small interviews –

interviewer with Shaun and/or Pete, Neighbouring shop owner to the salon, first sheep to be sheared by Shaun and Ratso

Identity

Personal Development, English, Creative Arts

- Discuss with students what makes us who we are – introduce the concept of ‘identity’. Elicit from students what information we give to ‘identify’ or introduce ourselves. Guide students in terms of questions such as:
 - What is your name?
 - What kinds of things do you like to do?
 - What is your favourite food?
 - What is your favourite colour?
 - Where do you live?
 - How do you stand?
 - How do you speak? etc

NB For older students you could extend the discussion to include cultural identity considering if the country we live in or ‘culture’ we associate with impacts on aspects of our identity. Due to the production being set in the ‘country’, a concept of city versus country identity could also be considered.

- Discuss how the characters in ‘PETE THE SHEEP’ were given an identity. How did the actors make us aware whether the character was an animal or a human?
- Ask students to walk slowly around the room. As the teacher calls out different characters from the production, students should explore how that animal or human character moved. Encourage students to find different ways of moving as the character and not just copying what they saw the actors doing.

Identity – Character building (exploration)

- Encourage students to brainstorm other characters that may live in and around the action that took place in the production e.g. other shopkeepers, cook at the shearing shed, sheep dog from next farm, mayor etc Encourage their imagination and explore all possible ‘characters’ that may be central to country communities.

- Ask students to stand with their eyes closed and imagine one of these new characters. Referring back to the initial discussion on what shapes our identity, ask students to come up with specifics about their new character.
- Once they have had time to visualise the character, students should then be guided to move about the room as their new character. If they are an animal, they should consider different ways to indicate this to an audience.

Adaptation for older students – The more confident students could be encouraged to introduce themselves to another character as they pass (basic greetings only).

Identity -- Character building (Hotseating)

NB **Hotseating** is an activity where students can work in either small groups or as a whole class. One individual sits in the middle of a circle and is asked questions. They need to respond in character as if they were being interviewed. A student could also sit at the front of the class if the activity is being facilitated as a whole class exercise.

- Students are to spend some time individually considering their own new character. Having the identity questions discussed initially up in the room may help them in their decision making process.
- Students are to participate in a Hotseating activity where their character becomes the individual being 'hotseated'.
- Students can begin to explore the way their character will move as it responds, but focus predominantly on voice and the building of character or identity. Students asking questions should draw on the list of questions developed by the class earlier in the activity. All students should have the opportunity to have their character 'hotseated'.
- To culminate the activity, students should create a profile of their character – this could include an image. They should be encouraged to plan what information they need to include. Students could create the profiles by hand or through the use of technology.

Adaptation for older students – Older students could extend the characterisation activity into improvisation through an activity titled '*Shaun's Salon Waiting Room*'. Two characters are placed side by side and they need to engage in a conversation where they learn about each other. After a period of time, one of the characters is called up to have their hair done and another takes its place. This continues to rotate until all the 'characters' in the group have had a chance to be in the waiting room. NB *This activity is often done with people exploring characters as they come and go from a bus stop, shop queue etc*