

ISHI

An outsider's story

As part of an occasional series, **Pam Bowell** imagines how another detailed example of a whole class drama might unfold.

The unit, designed for upper KS2/KS3, is based on the true story of Ishi, the last surviving member of the Yahi tribe of Native Americans. The theme of the drama is 'the outsider' and it relates to modern-day issues of asylum seekers, refugees and all those who find themselves on the outside of social groups. Writing opportunities arising from the drama are suggested.

The unit provides step-by-step guidance that the most inexperienced could follow but it is flexible and open to adaptation. It is important to remember, though, that it cannot include the contributions that the students will be making to the drama and you will need to be ready to respond to what they offer as the drama unfolds.

Context

where the drama is set

- In the first session, wherever the students decide
- In subsequent sessions, in and around Oroville, California in 1911

Roles

who the students are going to be in the drama

- Townspeople
- who you are going to be in the drama*
- Newspaper reporter, State Governor's Representative

Strategies

the different ways of working in drama

- Role on the Wall
- Still Image
- Thought Tracking
- Improvisation
- Teacher in role
- Overheard conversations
- Small group playmaking
- Conscience Alley
- Dance Drama
- Writing in Role
- Physical Theatre

Resources

- Session 1: Photograph of Ishi taken when first discovered – gaunt, cropped hair and exhausted (see side panel for website address) and copies for the students – I suggest one between two so that they are precipitated into discussion.
- Session 1: large outline of a body on wall lining paper or frieze paper + large felt tipped pens
- Session 1: Digital camera
- Session 2: The photograph of Ishi
- Session 2: Digital camera and note book with pencil.
- Session 2: the body outline produced last session + Blu-tak or other stuff to fix it to the wall
- Session 3: note pad and pencil (for your role as governor's representative)
- Session 4: Sound system

- Session 4: Music – *Dance of the Spirit*. Northern Cherokee, Music of the Native American Indians
- Session 5: Photographs of the region that was Ishi's tribal homeland in northern California in the foothills of Mount Lassen.
- Session 5: Sound System
- Session 5: Music – *Dance of the Spirit 2*, Northern Cherokee, Music of the Native American Indians (*for the journey with the anthropologists*)
- Session 5: Music – *Before the Beginning* Robert Tree Cody & Will Clipman, *Heart of the Wind* Music for Native American Flute & Drums (*for Ishi's journey*)
- Session 6: Music – *Lamentation* Tunde Jegede (*for the whole group sculpture*)
- Session 6: Digital camera
(*If you are not able to find the pieces of music suggested here, then other suitably atmospheric music would do.*)

SESSION ONE

- Make sure you have the copies of the photograph and the outline and pens near to hand.
It is critical that you don't tell the students anything about the person in the photograph or his story until we get much later into the unit.
- Ask the students to sit in a circle on the floor and join them (with the photos)
- Explain that we are going to begin a piece of drama that is going to last over a number of sessions and to begin we are going to use a photograph. Tell them that you are going to use a signal (click of fingers, clap, drum beat) as a means of stopping and starting the drama.
- Explain that, in pairs, you would like them to decide on something

that we think we know about the person in the photograph from what we can see. What we are NOT doing at this point is trying to invent a story. So, 'He's 46 and lives in Wimbledon' is not what we are after – but things like 'He looks hungry' and so on, are.

- Introduce the body outline. Explain that in drama, because we have to work together, we need to agree things between us. So, we are going to ask pairs to share their ideas and if we can agree then we are going to write the word or phrase we have agreed on, on the part of the body that suggested that word to us.
- Once you have built up a collection of contributions, you need to explain that we will come back to the person in the photograph later, but to begin with we are going to work with the outline we have created together.
- Explain that the sad truth is that we can find people who are... (read out all the things the students have recorded on the outline) all over the world in times past and now. Tell them that we are going to explore that for a while.
- Ask each pair to join with another to form groups of 4. (You may feel you would rather designate who goes in which group, yourself).
- Ask the groups to think of a set of circumstances (famine, homeless, war etc.) either now or in the past in which the sort of character we have built up together might be found.
- Now their task is to imagine themselves to be other people in that place with him or her. They must decide how they are

connected to him or her and what their attitudes are – passerby, guard, aid worker, bully, in the same predicament, sympathetic, oblivious, hostile.

- Now they need to make a group still image – as if captured in a photograph – of their scene. Tell them that they must work out where they want the archetype to be – standing, sitting, lying down. Explain that you'll hold the outline in position when they show their still images to each other.
- Ask them to think hard about their body language and facial expressions.
- Using your signal, get the students to practise all together.
- Then group by group share the work. It is important that everyone can see clearly the group that is sharing. If necessary, ask the observers to move. They need to be able to 'read' all the signs.
- Ask the observers to suggest where the scene is taking place, who the participants are and what their attitude to the archetype is. Discuss how they came to these conclusions and ask the group to tell how close the observers got to what they were trying to show.
- Now pair each group with another. We are going to use drama strategy called 'thought tracking'.
- In each set of groups ask one group to make their still image and then ask each student in the partner group to join the still image by standing and linking to the original group by touching the shoulder of one of the people in the still image.
- Ask them to decide one line of

dialogue that they think their person in the image might be saying.

- Now swap and have the second group make their still image and the first group members to give voice to the thoughts of the people in the image.
- Now share these with the whole class, pair of groups by pair of groups.
- After all the groups have shared their work, make sure that you draw their various settings together and remind them that people often find themselves on the outside and that they have explored a number of them.
- However, remind them that their work began with a picture. Explain that the person in the photograph was a real person with an astounding life story and that next time in drama we will begin to find out who he was and what happened to him.
- Make sure that you keep safe the body outline as you will need it for the next session.

Writing opportunity

You could take digital photographs of each of the group still images and the students might write a speech bubble and a thought bubble for each of the characters.

Writing opportunity

The students might use the words they collectively generated on the archetype as the basis for a poem.

SESSION TWO

- Before you begin, fix the body outline to a wall – this will become Ishi in the Oroville gaol.
- Without revealing his name or the circumstances leading up to his arrival in Oroville, share the first part of Ishi's story beginning with his discovery in the corral of the abattoir up until the time he is placed in the padded cell in Oroville gaol. Be careful not to give any details that emerged later. Only give information about the dogs barking and the man being found. Make sure the students know the date – 29th August 1911. Remind them that telephones and telegraphs were invented before that time, so people could communicate quickly across distances.
- Explain that they are going to become the people who live and work in Oroville and that you will be in the drama too. Ishi is now in the town gaol. Make sure you point out the body outline and explain that it represents Ishi in gaol. Ask the students to decide individually what they do in Oroville. Remember that it is better for the drama for them to take on adult roles
- Explain that everyone in town is aware of Ishi and his being in gaol. They have heard him described as a wild man. Remind the students of their work last session in which they explored the different attitudes that people have to outsiders in their midst. Explain that this was true of the people of Oroville in their attitudes to Ishi.
- Ask the students to stand in a circle on the edge of the working space. Tell them that you are going to ask each of them in turn to find

a space and make a still image of their character going about their work in Oroville. Their proximity to the gaol will reflect the strength of their character's interest in the man in the gaol.

- Explain that once everyone is in position you are going to touch each person in turn on the shoulder and when you do you would like them to speak out loud so that everyone else can hear them, one sentence of dialogue which just lets us know what you are thinking about this situation 'It shouldn't be allowed', 'He's just another human being' etc. This should produce quite a dramatic moment and reveal the range of attitudes in the town.
- Once everyone has spoken use your signal to stop for a moment. Explain that in the end curiosity got the better of everyone and the townspeople gathered outside the gaol to try to find out from each other as much as they could about what actually was going on. Explain that when they hear your signal again, they should move down to the town centre and in role swap information to find out what they can.
- Once they have moved and begun to talk to each other you need to join in the drama as a newspaper reporter who has been sent to get the story. In this role you will be able to ask questions from a position of 'not knowing' that will help reinforce the story for the students and also help them to deepen their roles. You will be able to use your questioning to stir up the crowd if necessary by being quite extreme in the way you structure your questions. 'Can you confirm exactly what sort of creature has been captured?' 'Are you worried for the safety of your families?' etc.

ABOUT ISHI

Member of Yahi tribe of northern California

Discovered in corral of abattoir on outskirts of Oroville on 29th August 1911

The owner of the abattoir was awakened by the barking of dogs

Dazed and emaciated, Ishi could only speak the Yahi language, which could not be understood by anyone else.

Taken by Sheriff to the town gaol and put into padded cell for his own protection and because he was concerned about what a 'wild man' might do.

Word rapidly spread by telephone and telegraph and people came to Oroville from near and far to see 'the last wild Indian in America'.

Many were keen to exploit the economic potential and others were afraid of having a 'wild man' in their midst, yet others wanted to protect Ishi.

Two anthropologists arrive on 4th September to take Ishi to California State University museum in San Francisco.

They work closely with Ishi to learn his language and discover his story. He would not reveal his real name. This was against tribal custom. Ishi means 'man' in Yahi.

Museum of Anthropology opens on 11th October. Over the next 6 months 24,000 people visit the museum to watch Ishi make arrows and build fires.

Summer 1914 Ishi and anthropologists went back to visit his tribal homeland in the foothills of Mt Lassen.

Ishi died of tuberculosis on 25 March 1916.

What the anthropologists discovered

Massacres of the Yahi People began in 1865 by European settlers drawn to California by the gold mines.

Approximately 20 people remained and they hid in remote areas between 1870 and 1911. Ishi was one of them.

By 1910, the Yahi tribe was reduced to only 4. On 10th November, surveyors surprised them. Ishi escaped and hid, the remaining members were killed.

Ishi remained alone in his homeland. The only one in the world to speak his language and unable to speak any other.

Desperate and depressed, he left and began walking until, exhausted, he stumbled out of the wilderness into Oroville.

Googling Ishi will produce lots of very informative links with full details of his remarkable story. The photograph of Ishi needed for the unit can be found at: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:PSM_V86_D242_Ishi_the_last_of_the_yahi_tribe.jpg

SESSION THREE

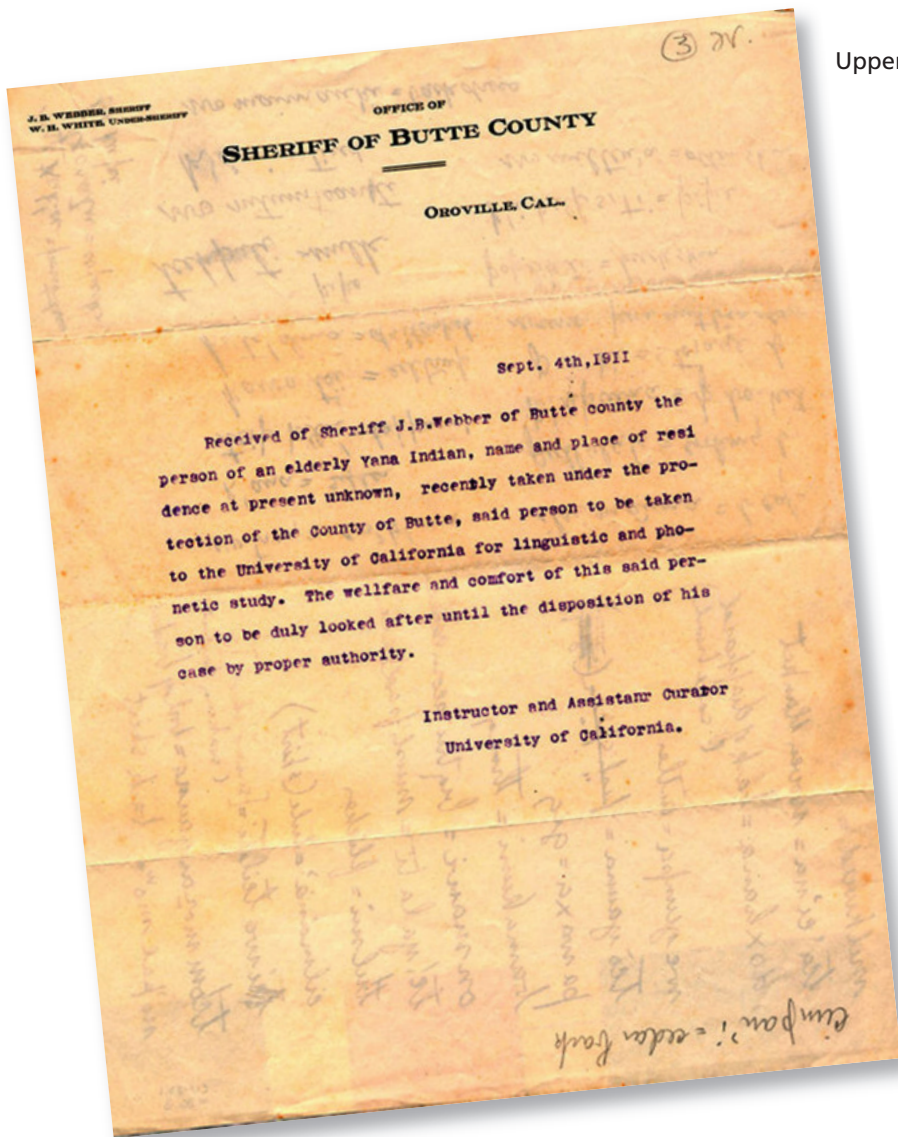
- Once this is underway, still in role, explain that you are going to write a front page spread on this amazing story and you'd like to take some photographs of the citizens of Oroville. Take photos of them in groups of about 4 and then explain that you have a deadline to meet so must hurry back to the newspaper office to get the story ready for printing.
- Use your signal to stop the drama and gather the students together in a circle all facing outwards. Explain that when they hear your signal, you would like them to turn around and all face inwards and immediately say one word that they think sums up how the people of Oroville are feeling about what is happening. This will give a 'snapshot' of the moment.
- Now remind them that the man in the gaol could perfectly hear all the noise although he didn't appear to understand what was being said.
- Now ask them to turn outwards again and this time when they hear the signal, to turn back inwards and immediately say one word that they think sums up how he was feeling.
- This should give a sharp juxtaposition.
- Now explain that this is where the drama must end for today and we will have to wait until next time to find out more.

In their photographic groups the students might create the front page of the newspaper, incorporating the photograph, captioning it and writing the story.

- Recap last session. You might read out some of the newspaper reports to help. Make sure you have your notepad and pencil near to hand. Make sure that the body outline is back 'in gaol'.
- Explain that when we start the drama again we will be back in Oroville and will again be the townspeople. Remind the students of the range of attitudes towards the man in the gaol that they showed last time.
- Explain that the townspeople will be in a meeting at the town hall. The governor of California is sending his representative to find out the views of the people of Oroville about what is to be done with the 'wild man'. He does not want to make a decision without taking their views into consideration.
- Process drama does not rely on the full-blown regalia of a theatrical production – set, costume, lights etc. However, sometimes we need to pay attention to some of these things – especially set. This is true in this case. To have the students sitting on the floor when in the story they are in a public meeting will work against what you are trying to achieve.
- So, at this point, ask them what they imagine the town hall meeting room would look like – how would the seats be set out? Then get them to arrange the chairs to look like the meeting.
- Now explain that we are just about ready to begin the drama and when we do, you will take the role of the Governor's Representative who has come to gauge the mood of the town and

find out what the citizens of Oroville would like to happen.

- Ask the students to find a seat and, in role, chat to the people next to them about what's going to happen – 'What's this all about?', 'What does the Governor want?' etc
- Now, enter the drama yourself as (give yourself a name) bringing your notepad & pen with you. 'Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. My name is and the governor of California, Governor Johnson, has sent me here especially to discuss with you good people of Oroville the very unusual situation that you have here. Governor Johnson is very concerned to ensure that he does not make a decision on how to move forward without your views about the 'wild man' in your midst being taken into full consideration. So, I am here to hear your views on what should be done. The Governor has cleared his diary this evening and is waiting at his office until I return and give your concerns to him. So, quite simply I need to know what you feel about this person, or should I say creature, and even more importantly, what you would like to happen. So, let's begin with what you feel about having this person in Oroville. Who would like to speak first?
- Encourage discussion and use your position to question and provoke if necessary. If the debate is one-sided make sure you suggest alternatives. Take notes and challenge and press for deep thought and a recognition of consequences. You could tell the citizens that the governor would really prefer them to come to an agreement about what is to be done and hopes that you will



became a living exhibit just ask the following question:

‘What else could they have done?’ Be ready for the responses and stretch the students by challenging their responses.

- Finally, ask the them to form a circle, facing outwards. Explain that on your signal they are to all turn around and face inwards and immediately say out loud one word that they think sums up how the townspeople of Oroville felt now that the situation had been resolved.
- Then ask them to face outwards again and this time, at the signal, turn back inwards and say a word that they think sums up how Ishi felt. This should create a powerfully dramatic moment on which to end the session.
- Explain that this is where the drama must stop for today but next time we will explore Ishi’s life further.

NB. At the end of the session make sure you put the body outline in a safe place because you will need it again in the final Session 6.

Writing opportunity

The students might write in role as the Governor’s Representative the report s/he made to the governor about what happened in the public meeting.

Writing opportunity

They might write in role the letters the townspeople wrote to the Editor of the local newspaper – The Oroville Echo – expressing their point of view about the turn of events.

be able to have a vote about it at the end of the meeting. If no consensus is forthcoming then you will explain that under these circumstances the Governor will take the decision himself and that they will just have to live with what he decides.

- The chances are that the students will present a wide range of views that is likely to reflect the actual range of opinions that were held in Oroville at the time. Some were quite brutal, others wanted to take Ishi in and convert him, others saw a commercial possibility, others wanted to take him back to where he had come from, some wanted to drive him out of town.
- Once the discussion has run its course and the vote taken then make your excuses to leave: ‘Well, the governor is waiting for me so I must catch the next train back to Sacramento. I will pass on your views and the governor will act accordingly. Thank you for your time, ladies and gentleman. Good evening.’
- Use your signal to stop the drama at this point and ask the students if they would like to know what really happened to the man. I am certain that they will clamour to know.
- Now tell them the final part of the story – that anthropologists were sent from the Museum of Anthropology at the University of California in San Francisco. They established a relationship with him. They discovered his name was Ishi etc etc. (See side panel on page 35.)
- Once you have told them what happened to Ishi – that he was taken to live in the museum and

SESSION FOUR

- Make sure you have your sound system set up at the beginning of the session.
- Recap last session – you could read out some of the reports and letters.
- Explain that the drama is now going to look at things from Ishi's perspective.
- This is the first time in the drama when we are going to ask students to take on the role of Ishi. Up until this point we have used the outline to represent Ishi but in the next episode we are going to bring him to life.
- Out of role ask the students to divide into groups of about 4-5. Explain that you would like them to create a small group play lasting no more than a minute that will show something of Ishi's life in the museum. Remind them that the anthropologists worked hard to learn his language so that they could communicate with Ishi and this was how his story became known. Remind them of what happened if necessary. Explain that the anthropologists provided him with artefacts from his dead culture and encouraged him to engage in cultural activities such as making arrows, clothing and so on whilst living in the museum and its grounds.
- Explain that their challenge is to be able to show in their small group plays what Ishi is thinking and feeling as people come to the museum to see him. You might suggest that working out how to show the language barrier will be a key to success.
- This is where you can move amongst the groups supporting and encouraging and reminding the students that they are trying to convey Ishi's thoughts and feelings.
- This will look like quite a short session on paper, here, but it's not because you need to give the students sufficient time to work out their ideas, improvise and polish their improvisations through rehearsal before sharing them with each other at the end.
- When the pieces are ready, explain that we are going to share them one by one. Remind the students that when they are watching they need to pay particular attention to how well Ishi's thoughts and feelings have been communicated. Ask them to watch out for things they thought were particularly effective. Make sure to feedback after each play.
- Explain that this is where we must end for today but we will be returning to Ishi, next time.

Writing opportunity

(Immediately afterwards I think would be best.) Ask the students to write in role as Ishi, expressing what he was thinking that evening after everyone had left the museum and he was on his own. Explain that he could hear the music of his people in his imagination as he was thinking. Play the music quietly in the background as they write.

Writing opportunity

The students might write the special brochure the museum might have produced for visitors coming to see Ishi.

SESSION FIVE

- Make sure you have the photos/PowerPoint of the area where Ishi came from ready as well as the sound system to play music.
- Recap last session. Explain that we are going to return to Ishi's story when the drama begins.
- Out of role, tell the students that Ishi lived just for 5 more years after stumbling into Oroville but about a year before he died he agreed to take the two anthropologists who had befriended him back to his tribal homeland. They rode horses and walked.
- Show the images of the area and encourage the students to discuss with a partner what sort of landscape they can see.
- Gather the attention centrally again and ask for suggestions. You could make a list of what is identified. The object of this is to recognise the ruggedness of the terrain and its diversity – mountains, forests and rivers, towering cliffs, boulders etc.
- Remind the students that there are many different ways we can make drama happen and that we are going to use a different strategy to recreate the expedition up into the isolated area where Ishi had lived before the rest of the Yahi people had been killed by white settlers.
- Ask the students to work in groups of 3 and out of role to select an aspect of the landscape that they have been looking at. If you have used a PowerPoint presentation of the pictures, which would be a good idea, it



“

What we are going to do is ‘build’ the landscape through which Ishi had walked when he left behind his deserted life and through which he brought the anthropologists on his last expedition.

might be helpful to have copies of the photographs for the children to handle. If this is so, you could just give each group a different photo and tell them that they are going to use it to help the drama.

- What we want the groups to do is to select a portion of the landscape – boulders, a cliff, forest trees, the face of a mountain etc – and recreate it using their bodies.
- What we are going to do is ‘build’ the landscape through which Ishi had walked when he left behind his deserted life and through which he brought the anthropologists on his last expedition.
- Once the groups have decided on their shapes – they need to make sure that they can hold the positions comfortably for three or four minutes, ask each group to develop some dialogue in the following manner.
- Firstly, tell them that the landscape hears and sees everything and remembers what happened to the Yahi people. Ask each group to select three words, phrases or single sentences that, if it could speak, the landscape might say to describe itself and then three more that it might say as it saw the anthropologists passing through it with Ishi. Would the land be hostile, fearful, welcoming, puzzled? Get them to work on how to say their

dialogue so that it fully conveys what the terrain is like and its attitude to the anthropologists.

- Now starting at one end of your working space, ask a group to take up their positions, now ask the next group to join on, and so on till all the groups are spread out in a twisted line across the working space. What we want is a pathway through but one which is rather difficult. I’m not suggesting that students climb on each other, but they might have to squeeze through or go under. What we are trying to create is the route Ishi and the anthropologists took to Ishi’s homeland.
- Once this is set up, explain that when we begin, they are to quietly keep repeating their words until the whole process is finished.
- Now, explain that the first group is going to ‘peel off’ and become Ishi and the anthropologists and that they will move through the landscape as it speaks. Once they get to the end they will take up their positions again but at the end and begin to speak their words. Once that happens the second group will ‘peel off’ and go through the terrain until every group has made the journey to the deserted land of the Yahi. Tell them also that you have a piece of music, Dance of the Spirit 2, that you will play whilst the journeys are made to help the atmosphere.
- Once all the journeys have been made, ask the students to form a circle, facing outwards and at your signal turn round to face inwards and immediately say a word that they think sums up how the anthropologists might have felt making the journey.

- Explain that we are going to do one more thing today. We are going to go back and try to imagine something of how Ishi must have felt when he made his decision to leave his now deserted home and to set off into the unknown on the journey that finally led him to the slaughter house in Oroville.
- Reform the groups of three. This time, they need to select three words, phrases or single sentences that the landscape might remember Ishi was thinking as he made the long walk away from all he knew after the last of his people died.
- We will use exactly the same process, this time with *Before the Beginning* as the music. This time, however, whilst explaining that the landscape stays in the same place, encourage the students to use arm gestures or upper body reactions as the landscape tries to hold on to its last human occupant.
- This should make a powerful and emotional piece of drama.
- Close the session with the circle strategy again, but this time when they turn back in ask them to say out loud a word that sums up how THEY feel about what happened to Ishi.
- Explain that we will have one more drama session next time and when we meet then, we will go back to the very beginning and remember that Ishi represents only one example of how people can feel on the outside.

Writing opportunity

The students might write the journal that the anthropologists kept on their journey to the land of the Yahi.

Writing opportunity

They might use the dialogue they created for Ishi's journey as the basis for a poem about his epic trek.

SESSION SIX

- Make sure that you have your sound system set up and put the body outline up so that you can refer back to it if necessary.
- Recap what happened last time – you might read some of the poems.
- Remind them that at the beginning of the drama in the first session we used the photograph of Ishi but from it were able to generate lots of different conditions under which people find themselves on the outside of a group.
- Ask the students to talk to the person next to them and see how many different sets of circumstances they can recall that were created in that session.
- Share the ideas and ask if anyone can add any more that they might have thought of as the drama has unfolded.
- Explain that we have come back to the beginning again because it is important not just to remember Ishi's story but also the stories of all those who find themselves alone and an outsider.
- Explain that we are going to begin by working with a partner. Ask each pair to find a space and be ready to listen to what is going to happen next.
- Ask the pairs to label themselves A and B. Tell them that the As are going to represent 'Outside' and the Bs are going to represent 'Inside'. Ask each participant to think of three words that help explain the concept they are representing.



- Now ask them to face each other and, starting with the As, take it in turns to exchange the words i.e. A says first word, B says first word, A says second word etc. This will happen with all the students working at once.
- Now ask all the As to gather together and all the Bs to do the same. Ask them to share their words with each other and see if they would like to add any others for either Inside or Outside.
- Now ask the two large groups to face each other, about a couple of metres apart. Now each group collectively is going to trade their words. This time ask them to think hard about how their category makes them feel and to use this to inform how they say their words. Think about facial expressions and body language.
- Tell the groups that when they hear your signal (it needs to be quite loud) they will instantly change so that As now represent 'Inside' and Bs 'Outside' and start to find appropriate words.

We are trying to make that transition seamless.

This shouldn't take too long but they certainly need enough time to think carefully about the words in the first instance and choose the most evocative they can think of. They also need to have enough time to practice how to give the words feeling.

- Once this exchange has concluded we are going to move on to the final sequence of the scheme.
- Explain that although English is a rich language with lots of different ways of describing things, sometimes seeing things makes them clearer. So we are going to

bear this in mind as we conclude our work.

- Ask the students to make a group of 4 and ask them to think about the two concepts that we have just been working on - inside and outside and the feelings they generated about them in the two large groups.
- Ask each group to imagine that if they could see feelings, what the feeling of being on the inside would look like and what the feeling of being on the outside would look like. Ask them to create two group statues, one for each.
- Now share these either by each group showing their two statues individually or by quartering the class and sharing them in 4 lots.
- Now, finally explain that we are going to finish with a whole class sculpture. Ask one group to remain together and all the other students to stand on the outside of the working space.
- Explain that we are going to use the first group as the starting point but then one person at a time we are going to build on it so that we create a single statue showing what we think feeling on the outside looks like. Also explain that you have a piece of music to help.
- Begin the music and ask each student one by one to come into the centre and build up the statue.
- Use your digital camera to take photos/film of all sides of the statue so the students can see it afterwards.
- When it is over ask the students to slowly break up the statue and

walk back to the edges of the working space.

- Now ask them to walk slowly towards the centre until they make a circle. Ask them to link arms and on your signal say out loud, one after the other around the circle, how it feels not to be excluded from a group.
- Explain that is the end of the drama; that they've been on a journey together and discovered a remarkable story. Encourage discussion and reflection and look for the resonances in today's society.

Writing opportunity

The students might write poems or lyrics to a song and compose the music.

Writing opportunity

They might write their own story of someone who is an outsider.



Pamela Bowell is Visiting Reader and teaches in the Department of Creative and Critical Arts, Bishop Grosseteste University College, Lincoln and is also a national and international drama consultant, workshop leader and speaker. She has a research interest in drama in education and is widely published. Formerly Chair of National Drama, she is now Co-Director of the ND online CPD initiative.

Contact: pb@pamelabowell.com
Website: www.pamelabowell.com