

Zombie Thoughts

Education Notes

Riverside's National Theatre of Parramatta

Riverside Theatre

May 27 – June 5 2021



INTRODUCTION

These teacher's notes have been designed to assist you with curriculum-based learning activities in relation to the performance of *Zombie Thoughts* by Jennifer A. Kokai and Oliver Kokai-Means, directed by Warwick Doddrell, 2021, for Riverside's National Theatre of Parramatta. We hope the resource will assist your students to further enjoy and enhance their performing arts experience back in the classroom.

The activities are designed for students in years 3-8. NSW Board of Studies has been used as guides for planning them, however you should adapt each one to suit the stage of your class as well as the curriculum focus, and outcomes used in your school. Some websites are suggested within the resource, we recommended that you visit the sites and assess the suitability of the content for your particular school environment before using them.

PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTION

In Australia, almost one in seven children struggle with anxiety. Written by mother and son playwrights Jennifer A. Kokai and Oliver Kokai-Means, *Zombie Thoughts* offers a powerful tool to teach young people about Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD), in a fun and entertaining way. After having his own experiences of GAD, Oliver created *Zombie Thoughts* when he was nine, specifically to speak to other young people about the condition.

Inspired by video games, like old school Mario or Pacman, *Zombie Thoughts* takes us to different computer 'play' levels where the power of our mind controls our experience of the world. Sam or Pig are best friends and the avatars in this epic fantasy game in which all Sam's deepest darkest fears come to life. Performed as an interactive choose-your-own-adventure story, spectators have the power to decide which actor will play each character, what resources they get to use and where they go. Together the audience and Pig helps Sam through his fears.

The production is a fun and engaging springboard for parents, families and teachers and anyone who has suffered with anxiety to begin a journey to recovery and acceptance.

From the Program Coordinator. "a great way to demystify anxiety for your students... and learn about some tools for managing mental health and develop empathy for others going through anxiety."

A review by review by Jordan Elizabeth Henry. "As a bearer of zombie thoughts, myself, I wish I had had a tool like this play as I was growing up. This play is a game-changer for kids with anxiety disorders, and an incredible tool of understanding for kids who don't."

A review by Rachel Bublitz. "I think we often try to water down plays for children, and what I like most about this play is that it doesn't do that at all. It tackles very real feelings held by people of all ages and doesn't sweep them under a rug, but instead puts them front and center in a way that helps you understand things from a different perspective"

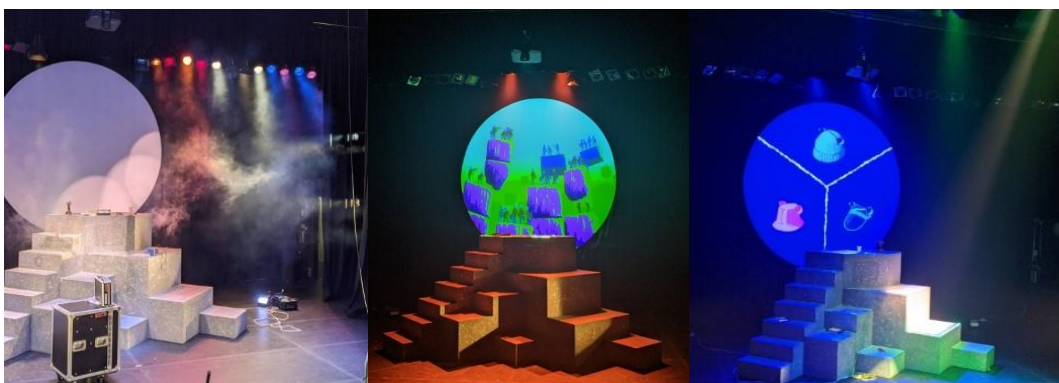
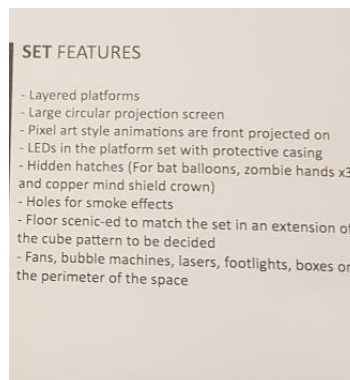
PRODUCTION NOTES: DESIGN CONCEPT BY ISABELLA ANDRONOS

The idea of breath is central to the design concept of Zombie thoughts. Used in the play as a means of dealing with anxiety; we see Sam taking deep breaths, inhaling and exhaling. 'Breath' becomes a way of defeating the evil machine. In the design wind and bubbles feature as a reference to this concept.

The set is a series of block like shapes, arranged to create a pseudo pyramid shape, it can be seen as a 3D manifestation of digital pixel shapes. The set will be painted in pale colours, mimicking the block-like forms. It may be lit in bright colours for some of the levels [of the game], however the scenic colour should be pale so coloured lighting will show up on it well. There are stairs on the OP [opposite prompt or/stage left] side of the set and block shapes on the PS [prompt side / stage right] side. Each block has an LED square along its top face. Some blocks open up to reveal props.

There is a circular screen US [upstage]. This is used to project 8bit/pixel art animations. They will create an immersive experience for each level. They will mostly feature sky for each level, as well as elements for the landscape. They may feature subtle movement such as clouds drifting, snow, rain or smoke. The design will feature bright, saturated, game colours.

When the game is "Paused", we slowly fade back from these saturated colours to the natural colours of the set.



A WORD FROM DIRECTOR – WARWICK DODDRELL.

What attracted you to this project?

As someone who plays video games, I loved this play straight away. It was fun and exciting in an epic world, like all my favourite video games, but also spoke so clearly about Anxiety, and I found my own thoughts and words expressed through these characters. I loved the friendship of these two characters, but particularly the metaphor of the video game - the Voice controlling our thoughts, making us believe things that aren't true. In life this can be imagining that other people don't like us, or don't like our work - or even which can grow and grow into a terrible monster that stops us from participating and enjoying life. The message of the work is so simple and effective, but hard to do in our hardest moments, so I was excited to tell a story full of hope and to help people to overcome their own anxieties.

What do you hope the audience will feel watching the show?

I hope they are excited and get swept along with these characters! I love the story of their friendship and how they help each other along the journey, and hope audiences will enjoy their story as much as I do. Hopefully audiences share in some of Sam's fears, laugh with them and celebrate their victory with them.

What is the best thing about working in theatre?

Theatre is a lot of hard work, and it takes many people with lots of experience and expertise in many different fields to create something magical. The best part of working in theatre is the collaborative experience, sharing ideas and working together to create something. The moments when everyone is excited together, bouncing ideas around - those are the best moments.



CLASSROOM CONTEXT AND CURRICULUM LINKS

Zombie Thoughts provides learning opportunities for students in years 3 - 8 (Stage 2 - 4), with links to the following curriculum areas: English, Creative Arts- Drama, PDHP.

English

Stage	Content	Objectives	Outcomes
Stage 2	Text Type: Drama Texts in different media and technologies Symbolism in texts	Reading and viewing Thinking Imaginatively and Creatively Expressing Themselves	EN2-4A uses an increasing range of skills, strategies and knowledge to fluently read, view and comprehend a range of texts on increasingly challenging topics in different media and technologies EN2-8B identifies and compares different kinds of texts when reading and viewing and shows an understanding of purpose, audience and subject matter EN2-10C thinks imaginatively, creatively and interpretively about information, ideas and texts when responding to and composing texts EN2-11D responds to and composes a range of texts that express viewpoints of the world similar to and different from their own
Stage 3	Text Type: Drama Texts in different media and technologies Symbolism in texts	Reading and viewing Thinking Imaginatively and Creatively Expressing Themselves	N3-3A uses an integrated range of skills, strategies and knowledge to read, view and comprehend a wide range of texts in different media and technologies EN3-7C thinks imaginatively, creatively, interpretively and critically about information and ideas and identifies connections between texts when responding to and composing texts EN3-8D identifies and considers how different viewpoints of their world, including aspects of culture, are represented in texts
Stage 4	Text Type: Drama Texts in different media and technologies Symbolism in texts	Objective A: communicate through speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing and representing Objective B: use language to shape and make meaning according to	EN4-1A responds to and composes texts for understanding, interpretation, critical analysis, imaginative expression and pleasure EN4-2A effectively uses a widening range of processes, skills, strategies and knowledge for responding to and composing texts in different media and technologies EN4-3B uses and describes language forms, features and structures of texts appropriate to a range of purposes, audiences and contexts

		<p>purpose, audience and context</p> <p>Objective C: think in ways that are imaginative, creative, interpretive and critical</p> <p>Objective D: express themselves and their relationships with others and their world</p>	<p>EN4-5C thinks imaginatively, creatively, interpretively and critically about information, ideas and arguments to respond to and compose texts EN4-6C identifies and explains connections between and among texts</p> <p>EN4-7D demonstrates understanding of how texts can express aspects of their broadening world and their relationships within it</p> <p>EN4-8D identifies, considers and appreciates cultural expression in texts</p>
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Drama

Stage	Content	Objectives	Outcomes
Stage 2	Playbuilding	Appreciating	DRAS2.4 Responds to, and interprets drama experiences and performances
Stage 3	Playbuilding	Appreciating	DRAS3.4 Responds critically to a range of drama works and performance styles
Stage 4	The actor/audience relationship, Production elements, Storytelling.	<p>Making</p> <p>Performing</p> <p>Appreciating</p>	<p>4.1.1 identifies and explores the elements of drama to develop belief and clarity in character, role, situation and action</p> <p>4.2.3. explores and uses aspects of dramatic forms, performance styles, theatrical conventions and technologies to create dramatic meaning.</p> <p>4.3.1 identifies and describes elements of drama, dramatic forms, performance styles, techniques and conventions in drama</p> <p>4.3.2 recognises the function of drama and theatre in reflecting social and cultural aspects of human experience</p>

PDHPE

Stage	Content	Objectives	Outcomes
Stage 2	Health, Wellbeing and Relationships	Knowledge and Understanding	PD2-2 explains and uses strategies to develop resilience and to make them feel comfortable and safe
	Healthy, Safe and Active Lifestyles		PD2-6 describes how contextual factors are interrelated and how they influence health, safety, wellbeing and participation in physical activity

<p>Stage 3</p>	<p>Health, Wellbeing and Relationships</p> <p>Healthy, Safe and Active Lifestyles</p>	<p>Knowledge and Understanding</p>	<p>PD3-2 investigates information, community resources and strategies to demonstrate resilience and seek help for themselves and others</p> <p>PD3-3 evaluates the impact of empathy, inclusion and respect on themselves and others</p> <p>PD3-6 distinguishes contextual factors that influence health, safety, wellbeing and participation in physical activity which are controllable and uncontrollable</p>
<p>Stage 4</p>	<p>Health, Wellbeing and Relationships</p> <p>Healthy, Safe and Active Lifestyles</p>	<p>Knowledge and Understanding</p>	<p>PD4-2 examines and demonstrates help seeking strategies and behaviours play in supporting themselves and others</p> <p>PD4-3 investigates effective strategies to promote inclusivity, equality and respectful relationships</p> <p>PD4-6 recognises how contextual factors influence attitudes and behaviours and proposes strategies to enhance health, safety, wellbeing and participation in physical activity</p> <p>PD4-7 investigates health practices, behaviours and resources to promote health, safety, wellbeing and physically active communities</p>

PRE-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES

These activities are suggestions to prepare students for their trip to theatre and designed to encourage anticipation in the show itself and understanding of what is happening.



1. Zombie Thoughts and video games

In introducing a trip to the theatre to see *Zombie Thoughts*, tell students that it is a play that it was written as a play by a nine-year-old boy and his mother and that it is set in a video game.

Q: Who in the class likes computer games?

Q: What kind of games do you like to play?

Just like books, the games and styles of computer games have changed over time. Take a look and perhaps even try some of the computer's games played in the past (1970-1995). Games like:

- Pac Man - <https://pacman.cc>
- Sonic the hedgehog - <https://sonicthehedgehog.org/>

Alternatively share some Youtube samples on a TV screen. Ask students to comment on the styles of graphics, the complexity of the game, and the music. Which game would they most like to play?

The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6hjG6MCcZ8&t=1587s>

The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0aJIVLN8E68&t=1009s&ab_channel=WorldofLongplaysWorldofLongplaysVerified

The Secret of Monkey Island

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QgRIXntFhww&t=1213s&ab_channel=SourceSpy91SourceSpy91

Commander Keen

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YUyQSfKRU1w&t=4s&ab_channel=DosgamertDosgamert

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iKHUOKVzo0Q&t=2017s&ab_channel=AI82RetrogamingLongplaysAI82RetrogamingLongplays

2. The show synopsis – what is *Zombie Thoughts* about?

Zombie Thoughts is a story inspired by computer games, but it is pretend. It is a live show. The audience will meet two actors / avatars who are about to play a game. The students will get to decide what they wear and who plays the character of Sam and who plays Pig.

At each gaming level the audience may decide which spaces the characters go into, the monsters they need to fight or what tools the characters might carry to aid them.

Part of Sam's character is to feel fear and anxiety. On each level he will need to conquer his nerves in order to face his challenge and get to the next stage. It is Pig's optimism that helps tackle these fears step by step.

Q: Have you ever felt anxiety or fears in facing a challenging situation?

Q: What types of situations make you nervous?

Q: What does that feel like in the body?

Watching the characters play the game and get to 'the next level', it is possible to learn why anxiety occurs as well as techniques of shutting down that critical voice that can be heard in all of our own heads. We also learn to breathe through difficult situations.

3. Imagining places and spaces

Zombie Thoughts will be performed live on stage. The audience can expect to hear different sounds and music. They will also see changing lights as well as lots of physical action by the actors. There will be lots of props used objects like hats and rubber chickens. They might also feel things on their skin like wind and bubbles. The stage will be decorated with a set. Like the illustrations in a book or the graphics of a video game, the set creates the space upon which the action happens and reflects the themes of the show. The set for *Zombie Thoughts* is designed to be multiple different places and spaces anywhere on the planet from a desert to a mountain. It is a strong block design and if you look closely you will see it is painted with lots of different coloured dots which reflect the pixels in a computer image.

Q: What do think the different places that set will become? [the different levels of the game – what scenes might they be?].

Q: Why do you think the same space will become different places? [it is pretend, not a film].

Q: How does a set become a different place? [in our imagination. Try the space hop game].

Activity – Space Hop game

Create a large circle with the students and in the centre place a chair.

Ask a volunteer to use a chair to start a 'doing' activity e.g., pretending that the chair is an oven and starting to cook a meal, or driving a bus or plane that is out of control. When a

student sees what is happening they shout ‘freeze’, to stop the action and then joins in the scene as a second actor. The scene continues until another person shouts ‘freeze’. This time the incoming actor taps one of the people on the shoulder indicating for them to leave and takes their place exactly. The new actor will change the action completely to a different space entirely in which all the actors are new characters. Actors will take their lead and guess where they are based on the words and actions of the newcomer. The idea is that the silhouette of one scene inspires a completely different scene. The actors must quickly adapt and change to the new offering. The rules are to go with the flow. The action can thus change from a kitchen scene to being in an office to flying in a hot air balloon.

Message: When you watch the *Zombie Thoughts* performance see if you count how many different places it can become and how the actors make us believe they are on a different level. Watch out for special effects that come out of it like moving images, smoke, bubbles.

4 Anticipation and prediction [Music and sound]

When you are watching the show, listen out for the sound effects and the music that you will hear.

Q. If the show is set in a video game what kind of music do you imagine you will hear? (remember the show features old style computer games).

Team Mission. Predict the music that will be used by finding music clips from older style computer game like *Mario*, *Pacman*, *Donkey Kong* that could be used in the show.

5 Going to the theatre

To introduce your students to ideas about theatre or to extend their knowledge and understanding, talk about the following with your group.

- What do you know about the theatre?
- What shows have you seen?
- How is live show different from a film (real people, actually happening in front of you etc.)
- Prepare students that lights will go down as in the cinema, there will music, voices, and lots of nice surprises.
- Remind them in this show that they will be encouraged to participate.
- What questions do they have?

POST PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES

After the performance check in with students about what they remember about the show. Give them opportunity to talk and reflect about they liked and didn't like about it.

Activity Recounting: Who can remember what happened in the play?

Ask the group to find a partner and space to work in. Choose a moment from the play they liked the most. Use body shape and facial expression to create a frozen image / tableau of that moment and a sound to go with it.

Allow the groups to prepare and then ask each group to show their image. Ask group to interpret what they are seeing.

Individual Theatre Review (Secondary Students): The purpose of a writing a theatre review is to discuss the merits of a show, thinking about its strengths and weakness.

- What were your initial responses to the performance?
- Briefly summarise the narrative plot of the play.
- What were the key issues and themes?
- What dramatic strategies were used to convey these themes, how successful were they?
 - Overall look of the production, how did design contribute to the themes, what features were particularly effective.
 - What sounds or multimedia were used in the performance. How did it contribute to the performance?
 - What did you think of the acting in the performance? How clearly were the characters established? How strong was the vocal technique of the actors? How strong was their movement?

ZOMBIE THOUGHTS INSPIRED CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Zombie Thoughts the play reminds us that our thoughts are not always real. The following suggested classroom activities are related to identifying negative thought patterns, identifying attributes that can help change circumstances and finding ways of combating fears and demonstrating that things are always changing. These techniques are useful for strengthening mental health as well as in creating imaginative stories.

N.B It may be useful to have on hand an accessible box of eclectic dress up pieces and props for students to use.



TOPIC 1: LOOKING AT HEROES

Overview: These activities are about externalising ideals of superheroes and bravery.

Q 1: Who were the characters in the show and what do remember about them?

- The Machine controls the world. Can shape shift. It can be played by as any age, any race/ethnicity, or gender. It manipulates people by provoking them with thoughts that frighten or worry them.
- Sam is 9 years old. They have an anxiety disorder and sometimes gets depressed. They try to be brave, but often fails or allow their fears to get the better of them. They get upset and frustrated easily and give up. They are smart with words but not always smart with emotions. They can be played by as any age, any race/ethnicity, or gender.
- Pig is Sam's friend and sidekick. A wacky pun telling pig who always sees the positive side of every situation and helps Sam by getting them to see things differently. Pig can also be played by as any age, any race/ethnicity, or gender.

Q2: Did they remind you of anyone? Why?

Q3: Was there a hero in the show? Who was it? Why?

Q4: What makes someone a hero or a superhero in your eyes?

Main Group Activity - Make your own Superhero.

In groups of 4 the mission to make a superhero that could solve the problems of the world.

On a long piece of butcher's paper get someone in each group to lie on the paper while another, draws around their body as a template in pencil. The group should use this shape to create a superhero adding clothes and a secret tool/weapon. Answer the questions.

- a. What is their name?.....
- b. What is their mission / who do they protect?.....
- c. Who is their arch nemesis/enemy?.....
- d. What do they look like/ how would you recognise them if they came to rescue you?
- e. How do they know how to find people? / how do they travel?.....
- f. What is the weapon/ tool that they use to help, how does it work?.....
- g. What is their secret weakness?.....

Presentation: Once the groups have finished their heroes get each group to hold up their characters and talk about them? Give the class time to ask questions.

Extension Question 1: What are the things that make you, you?

Extension Question 2: Even though we might not be superheroes, what are the things that we can do to help others? Make a list.

TOPIC 2: CONTROLLING ANXIETY AND FACING FEARS.

Overview: The show reminds everyone that fears are in our mind, they are not real. These following activities are about practicing thinking differently and finding space and normalising getting things wrong.

PART 1

Q: What did the machine do to Sam to make him feel afraid (manipulate his thoughts)?

- It reminded him constantly of his fears and made him think that everything was doomed. This is exactly what that critical voice in our own brain does to us. How can we find ways to remind ourselves that the critical voice in our heads is not real?

Individual task: Give students a few minutes to make a list of all their fears/worries.

Example: Separation from parents, what people think about me, can I do this....

Group task: Ask students to share some of their fears to create a class list of common concerns. Notice how we often have similar fears.

Group task: What does it feel like to be afraid? What happens in your body? *Example: stomach-ache, nausea, headaches, tingling in the feet, hard to breathe....*

Group Activities to breath and feel more grounded. Adults and children alike can practice getting out of their heads by being more present in their bodies. The following exercises are practical ways to ground the body and allow us to be aware of our surroundings. You may like to choose some meditation music to have on in the background.

1. Create a sumo type stance, legs apart and bend. Breathe deeply three times. On the word stamp into the ground feeling the sensation at the bottom of your feet. On the word stop hold the pose and breathe deeply again. The idea is to feel the ground underneath you.
2. Find an action pose that makes you feel strong and powerful. Find moments to call for that action pose and get student to hold it for the count of 8. At the end of the pose student should shout, I am ready.
3. Take long deep breathes. Breathing in for 4, hold for 4, breathe out for 4. Increase to 6 counts, then 8 counts and then 10. The idea is to slow down the breathing and concentrate on the breath.
4. Take the students on a guided meditation. For example, in a seated circle ask students to focus into the centre. Speak in a slow calm voice “Imagine taking a seed out of their pocket (what colour is it? what is its shape?). Imagine, the spot in the centre of the circle is a patch of soil, get out a spade in our mind eye and dig a hole. Now place the seed into it and cover the seed with spoil. In your mind’s eye take a watering can and put some water on the seed. Watch the space. See the green shoots come up from the ground and turn in to a plant. See a bud and watch the bud getting bigger and bigger until it begins to flower. What colours are the petals? What type of flower is it? What does it smell like?”
5. If a guided meditation feels too hard, try passing around the circle tactile materials, items with different textures and smells. The idea is to give students time to feel, smell, describe what they are touching. Try sending around a different object each session. As a variation this could be activity can be done blindfolded.
6. An excellent exercise effective in building concentration and being in the moment is to attempt for the group to count to 20. This must be done by a single person starting with “1” out loud, then in the silence a second saying “2”, and then another “3” and so on. If two or more people say a number at once then the group is to go back to 1.

PART 2

Group discussion: Tell me a time you actually failed and how did it make you feel?

Group discussion: Have there been times when you thought “I couldn’t succeed” but did?

Activity: 1, 2, 3 Yay Game.

Purpose: Many of us have a fear of failure or not being good enough. In this game we practice failing to remind us that it is ok to lose.

In pairs count to three the repeat: A -1, B-2, A-3, B-1, A-2, B-3.

Go as fast as you can and if one person hesitates or stuffs up both shout “Yay” really loudly and start again.

Activity: Pointing and naming game:

Purpose: Many of us have a fear of failure or not being good enough. In this game we practice losing inhibitions.

Ask students to walk around the room in different directions as they walk students should point at the room and name things – window, door, ceiling, fan book etc. they should use their voice for this.

After a few minutes as students to do the same but this time ask them to say anything that that the object is not. So, if they point to a door, they should call out hair, desk, or something else. Notice that this time the exercise is harder. If it is not a door then there are so many other things it could be. Notice how we often repeat the same word. How our brain gets confused. Allow the students to laugh at themselves.

Q: What did Pig do to help Sam control his thoughts?

- Reminded him that his thoughts can be changed.

Activity: The reality game.

Purpose: In this game we practice changing ideas / thinking outside the square /and also listening and responding to another person. The purpose is not to make blindly positive statements that cannot be believed like “you are beautiful” or “you are brilliant at maths” but statements that can’t be argued with like “you have a normal nose”, “you are working to get better”.

Ask for two volunteers. One person to be Sam and the other Pig.

Ask Sam to make a negative statement like “I am rubbish maths”

Can Pig change that statement into a more realistic statement like “you are working to get better at maths”. Ask the class to help with this. Practice on changing a few more negative statements i.e.:

Sam: “I am ugly”

Pig: “What do think is ugly about yourself”

Sam: “I have disgusting eyes”

Pig: “You have blue/brown/green eyes” etc.

Note that the purpose is to be neutral not blindly complimentary. The exercise is not trying to make kids feel good about themselves but about tackling negative statements.

The exercise is extended by putting group into pairs who practice being both Sam and Pig.

Activity: Facing fears obstacle course

Purpose: Pig helped Sam by being a friend. It is sometimes hard to trust. In the obstacle course game, the challenge is to be a trustworthy friend.

In a large, cleared space, split the class in two groups A & B. Each makes an obstacle course in which a person has to go over, around and under things.

A member of group A then pairs with a member of group B.

Each group escorts their blind folded partner around their obstacle course ensuring they are safe and well looked after. Each person should have a turn at guiding and a turn at being led.

After the exercise is completed generate a group discussion on ways we can support and finding trust.

Q: What did it feel like to be blind folded and not know where you are going?

Q: What did your partner do to make you feel safe?

Q: What are the important things to do to reassure your partner when you are helping them?

Other Activities:

Like the meditations and concentration games these activities are useful in getting students to become playful and less self-critical.

Zombie clowns: In this activity students practice exaggeration, being over the top and dramatic. Start with students walking around the room in different directions when you call out 'zombie clowns', they immediately act out being **over the top zombies**. When you should "neutral" students go back to being themselves. You can vary this by calling out other emotions for them to exaggerate, like "angry clowns", "tired clowns", "happy clowns". Each clown should be as melodramatic and silly as possible.

What's the time Zombie clown: Variation on what's the time mister wolf, in which one person at the front. The class call out "what's the time Zombie clown?" Zombie calls out 'say 1 o'clock" group take one step forward. If they say 4 "o'clock, the group takes 4 steps forward. At some point the clown shouts, "time to wake up" and turns to chase the group. Whoever they touch becomes the new zombie clown.

Zombie wink: in a circle send a volunteer to wait outside. Rest of group close eyes while you go round the circle and silently touch one person on the back. That person becomes the killer, if they

catch someone's eye in the circle and winks, that person falls to the floor in a dramatic death collapse! The volunteer comes back and stands in the circle. The aim to is catch out and name the person who is the killer before they are killed themselves!

TOPIC 3: IMAGINARY WORLDS - WHAT COMES NEXT?

Overview: These activities are about stimulating the imagination and building confidence in creating and telling imaginary stories.

Group Activity: What's in the box?

Purpose: to stimulate imagination and comradery.

Get the group into a circle. Start the activity very simply the concentration exercise, sending a slow clap around the circle. Do this by turning to your right and making a clap. The person on your right should 'catch' the clap and send another to the person on their right and so on. If you wish you can do a send and third round getting faster each time.

Now change the clap into an imaginary box with the box staying the same size and shape around the circle.

The second time the box goes around the circle each person should look at the box open it and take out an object. If possible they should mime an action with the object while the group tries to guess what the object is. The object can be as small as a ring or a whistle of as large as an elephant. There is complete acceptance of everyone whatever comes out of the box, this can be done with a round of applause. Once the object has been guessed the imaginary box is passed on to the next person.

Group activity: Carnival of the fearsome creatures

Sam and Pig find themselves in a world of adventures, some of the creatures made them very afraid.

Q: can you remember what creatures made Sam afraid?

Q: what creatures make you afraid?

In groups of four create a single terrifying fantasy monster. Using stimulus add fur, feathers.

- How does the creature move?
- Where does it live?
- What does it like to eat?
- What is its strength?
- What is its weakness, how can it be defeated?

Give the group time to practice moving as one complete creature.

Extend this activity theatrically by finding some music and creating a parade. Have each creature walk across the room while you describe the creature to the class. Give opportunities for a person in each group to explain the characteristics of their made-up villain.

Individual or group task: After the parade, each student could draw a picture of their character and write a Wanted Poster to include the following information:

- The species name:
- Description: what it looks like, where it lives, what it likes to eat.
- Picture:
- A Warning: what the creature might do to frighten you.
- Advise: what you should do if you see it, a weakness it has and how it can be defeated?

Group Task: The Hero's Tale

In the groups of four, use the monster that has been created as the stimulus to write a narrative about how the creature was beaten by a hero. Once the story has been created, act it out. This can be practiced and shown to each other.

Title of our Play:

Characters:.....

1. **Monster** - as created by the group.....
2. **Hero of the story** – who is the main character, what is their name? how old are they?.....
3. **Other characters in the story?** How do they help or not help your character?.....

Scene 1 - Orientation

- Where does the story start, take place?
- What does the hero want or need?
- Why do they set out on their journey?

Scene 2 - Complication

- Where does the hero go to?
- What happens – How does your hero meet the monster? Where do they go?
- What stands in the way of the hero defeating the monster?
- Who helps them? how do they help them?

Scene 3 - Resolution

- How does the hero decide to overcome their fear?
- What big action defeats the monster?
- What happens after the monster is defeated?

OTHER RESOURCES: *Zombie Thoughts* App

An app has been developed as a separate learning activity which can be played on Android or Apple handheld devices. Instructions on how to access is through the National Theatre of Parramatta website:

<https://riversideparramatta.com.au/NTofP/zombiethoughtsgame/>

It is not necessary to have used this app either before or when seeing the show. However, it does provide an additional classroom resource. It features two games inspired by the play as well as a feature through which students can make their own game online.

This is a safe environment - your information will not be shared with anyone.

FINAL ACTIVITY – BREATHE

Zombie Thoughts is a reminder that we can help ourselves to think clearer and make better decisions simply by finding a moment to breathe. Start and each class with a long deep breath.

Enjoy!

