

LEIGH DRAMA DEPARTMENT

Drama is just an entertaining way of learning communication skills.

There are no plays without people, so essentially Drama is the study of people. We explore speech patterns, body language, gesture, facial expressions, eye contact, movement, relationships and character. If I could rebrand the word 'Drama' (and I have tried with some success), I would call it 'Communication Skills' to clearly explain the skills gained from the subject. The training I did at Drama School and in Acting was the same as the training I did 10 years later for Media Sales at ITV, Mirror Group and Virgin Radio. This is why I feel so strongly that 'drama' is, today, the most important subject on the curriculum, even though the Government do not agree. We teach interpersonal communication skills which are imperative to balance the current technological generation. I have noticed over the past 10 years of teaching how listening skills, eye contact and 'people reading' skills have degenerated, and I believe this is a direct result of the rise in technology.

As a department we can offer extensive subject knowledge and a broad and tailored curriculum for all Drama students at The Leigh. This has led to four students under my training to gain places at accredited Drama Schools as young as 18 (Rose Bruford, Central, LAMDA and East 15), and with our results classified as the top 10 % in the UK for Performing Arts I am proud to say that the passion we have for the subject has transferred to the students with 90% of them going on to specialise in some aspect of Performing Arts i.e.: Acting, Theatre Studies, Production, Technical Theatre, Community Theatre, European Theatre, Teaching etc. Others have used the skills learnt to progress into Law, Politics, Public Services and Media, as they all require interpersonal skills and/or public speaking.



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Post 16 Performing Arts

Qualification: BTEC Level 3 Extended Certificate in Performing Arts (Acting)

Oxford University recognised and accepted BTEC Level 3 qualifications in November 2011. Vocational courses are now recognised for the practical skills and research they offer students. The Performing Arts BTEC offers more detailed subject knowledge and an in-depth industry awareness. The students will truly understand the reality of what is needed to progress and sustain a career in the Performing Arts Industry. If they choose to continue into acting this course will certainly inspire them but also they will understand REALISTICALLY the hurdles you face being an actor including: the reality of getting regular acting work and the resilience needed to try and sustain that; financial implications; organisation skills to run your own business; and the physical, vocal and emotional demands needed in the career. As a professional actress of 10 years, who trained at Rose Bruford on the acting course, I believe this course truly equips students in broad subject knowledge, technical skills and knowledge of the industry. It gives them a realistic view of the profession and hence allows them to make a clear decision if the industry is right for them. Naturally, all the skills are completely transferable and sellable on a C.V/Personal statement under the guise of 'Communication Skills.'

Overview Of The Units

Units 1,2 and 3 are mandatory and the fourth unit is selected by Teacher, depending on students' strengths each year, so this one is flexible.

Unit 1: Investigating Practitioners (Externally Assessed)

Students are given five weeks to prepare once the exam question is released. They can take four sides of A4 notes into a controlled assessment. They will have three hours to complete 2000 words on two practitioners linked to a given theme. Students must also submit a bibliography.

Learning aims

1. Investigate contextual factors of the practitioners; how have the contextual factors impacted on their repertoire.
2. Link contextual factors to given theme
3. Critically analyse the work of the practitioners
4. Present conclusions and independent judgments through effective investigation

Unit 2: Developing Skills and Techniques For Live Performance (Internally Assessed)

In this unit students undergo an extensive programme of training and exercises which will equip them for working in a range of performance situations. This is their induction into the performing arts, during which they will develop a 'toolkit' of essential skills and techniques as a foundation for their work in the profession.

Learning Aims

- A: Understand the role and skills of a performer
- B: Develop performance skills and techniques for live performance
- C: Apply performance skills and techniques in selected styles
- D: Review and reflect on development of skills and techniques for live performance

As part of their training they will:

- Take part in a series of workshops and practical sessions in which they will acquire and develop skills and techniques as a performer. These sessions will be led by their teacher/director, with occasional input from guest practitioners and will draw on a variety of physical, vocal and interpretive exercises used in performer training.
- Explore, apply and refine performance skills in relation to performance material in at least two different acting styles.
- In addition, they will research the role and responsibilities of the professional performer in order to understand training and career opportunities, the lifestyle of the performer and the demands of the profession for which they are training. Your research will include visits to theatres and investigating the work of professional performers through case studies.
- Produce a 'Performer's Journal / Blog' in which they review, set personal goals and targets and reflect on their creative development and progress.
- Apply their skills to performance material in one of those styles in showings to invited audiences. These performances will allow them to demonstrate their skills and versatility as a performer.



Unit 3: Group Performance Workshop

This **externally assessed** unit provides opportunities for students to draw on their individual practical performance skills and demonstrate an understanding of the methods and techniques for creating performance in order to contribute to the making and realisation of new performance material. Students will work in small groups to create an original performance piece in response to a stimulus provided in the external assignment briefing. The teacher/director will help students identify which strategies and techniques they may need to employ when exploring how to respond to the stimulus in order to create an inspiring and unique piece of theatre. The emphasis of the unit is on exploration and development of original performance material and the selection and application of appropriate performance skills. Students will devote much of the unit therefore to experimenting with devising methods, and using discussion, improvisation, staging and compositional techniques to put together a short performance of 15 minutes in which they will 'try out' their creative intentions and ideas to an invited audience.

This process is supported by FOUR digital milestone logs of 800 words at four stages of the process. The final workshop performance is filmed and sent to the examiner along with their digital milestone logs, which may include video footage from rehearsals, pictures and brainstorms if desired.



Unit 19: Acting Styles

The focus of this unit is to develop student's acting skills. It gives them the opportunity to take part in workshops exploring the acting techniques and practices of at least three theatre practitioners and/or theatre companies. They also research and analyse the key features of each acting style. They can then use some of the skills they have acquired in the rehearsal and performance of their own practical work based on ONE practitioner.

Learning Aims

- A:** Understand acting styles and techniques for performance
- B:** Develop acting styles, skills and techniques for performance
- C:** Apply acting styles, skills and techniques in rehearsal and performance
- D:** Review personal development and own performance

Undertake a detailed investigation into the key features of two different acting styles (and work of relevant practitioners associated with each style) and one theatre company. This will require students to attend teacher lead workshops on each practitioner/theatre company.

From this experience the student:

- Evaluates examples of vocal and physical work related to the three chosen acting styles comparing and contrasting the key features of each style
- Makes detailed reference to a specific practitioner's work from each of the three selected styles, including working methods and reference to specific productions.
- Evaluates the demands and requirements that each acting style places on the modern actor.

Developmental Classes and Workshops The student will take part in a series of teacher led classes and workshops in which they will explore and develop vocal, physical and interpretive acting skills related to a chosen acting style and practitioner.

Rehearsals

Once techniques have been developed they will apply them to a selected play that is indicative of the style of the practitioner explored in developmental classes and workshops.

The student will take part in rehearsals of their selected play to develop their understanding and application of the acting style and influence of the relevant practitioners.

Performance

You will perform the rehearsed piece to an audience.



Structure of Key Stage 5 Across the two years

| Module | Year 12 | Year 13 |
|--------|--|---|
| 1 | <p>Introduction to course and building trust and group dynamic.</p> <p>Unit 2 : Developing Skills & Techniques in Live Performance.</p> <p>Begin research into presentation/written report on 'Working Life of An Actor'</p> | <p>Unit 19: Acting Styles</p> <p>Practical exploration of THREE practitioners.</p> <p>Select ONE for performance and apply skills and techniques through rehearsals.</p> |
| 2 | <p>Explore skills and techniques of practitioner 1</p> | <p>Rehearse and final assessed performance for Unit 19.</p> <p><i>Optional retake of Unit 1 (highest grade taken by exam board)</i></p> <p><i>Paper released end of November.</i></p> |
| 3 | <p>Explore skills and techniques of practitioner 2.</p> <p>Apply to rehearsal of script.</p> | <p>External exam released - Unit 3: Group Performance</p> <p>12 weeks to create a devised piece based on stimulus from exam board.</p> <p>Develop ideas and structure.</p> |
| 4 | <p>Rehearse and perform for final assessment of performance.</p> <p>External exam released: Unit 1: Investigating Practitioner's work (5 weeks to prepare for controlled assessment)</p> | <p>Develop and rehearse.</p> |
| 5 | <p>Complete Unit 1 controlled assessment.</p> <p>Apply all knowledge of techniques to presentation/written report.</p> | <p>Final Performance for Unit 3.</p> <p>All coursework submitted by May 15th and students released to other subjects.</p> |
| 6 | <p>Complete and close Unit 2: Developing Skills and Techniques For Live Performance</p> | |