

# Directing Class: Alternative for Teaching Drama

*by* Meilinda Meilinda

---

**Submission date:** 14-Sep-2020 08:21PM (UTC+0700)

**Submission ID:** 1386739554

**File name:** Publikasi1\_05015\_3270.pdf (305.38K)

**Word count:** 3127

**Character count:** 16401

## Directing Class: Alternative for Teaching Drama

MEILINDA

*Petra Christian University – English for Creative Industry; English Department*

*Email: [meilinda@petra.ac.id](mailto:meilinda@petra.ac.id)*

### Abstract

3

Teaching drama in this era can be very challenging. Asking the students to read and understand drama is not as easy as several years ago when internet connection was not as prevalent as it is nowadays. There is a tendency from the students to surf for information through internet without really reading the actual literary work, which causes low understanding of the topic that they have learned. They also fail to analyze the literary work, let alone to learn meaningful values that they can use in their daily life. Based on my classroom experience in Petra Christian University, Surabaya, I would like to discuss how Directing class can be used to tackle this issue. In the class, students will not only learn the art of directing but also create a drama performance. Based on Bloom's taxonomy, the capability to create is the highest level of learning process. This paper will show how an interactive Directing class can help the students get the maximum benefit in learning literary work. The discussion will cover students' process to not only understand, analyze, and evaluate drama but also create a drama performance.

**Keywords:** directing, drama, literature major.

### Introduction

Drama as one of literary genres was a core subject in English Department in Petra Christian University (EDPCU). The class taught the students the history of drama world and trained them to be the critics. The training involved reading, understanding, and analyzing the play/drama script. The output from the class was the students' presentation and or essay on the assigned play script. Drama analysis enables the students to exercise their critical thinking and understanding toward the literary work. It also gives a chance to improve their English skills as English for Second Language learners. However, due to market's response toward the Department and unfortunate condition in term of student intake, a significant curriculum change took place.

Drama still becomes one of the important genres that the students should learn. However, teaching drama, has become more challenging nowadays compared to ten years ago, when I started my career as a lecturer. Drama used to be taught as an independent class after Literary Enjoyment Class and Literary Genre Class. However since 2012, Drama Class no longer existed. Students could only learn to analyze drama in Literary Genre Class 1 and 2, along with other literary genres. Students then have less study hour for learning Drama.

The condition gets more complicated with the type of my students nowadays. Anjali Singh, a faculty member of Manavrachna International University (2014) categorized them as Gen Z/ digital native generation. They are stereotyped as very active, motivated, goal oriented, challenging and adventurous beings who realize that they have social responsibility toward the society. Reading, then is becoming more challenging for the students due to fast pace that they have in life. Instead of reading the play, students surf the internet for study notes. It minimizes their capability to understand drama and sometimes, more dangerously, they even lose their own voice. They also fail to analyze the literary work, not to mention the inability to learn meaningful values that they can use in their daily life.

As a lecturer, I was frustrated. It urged me to find a solution since I still have to teach them Drama. What kind of approach should I use in order to teach Drama to my Gen Z students? Should I revisit the class' goals and match it with my students' expectation? Another class that I teach in EDPCU is Directing class. I would like to propose that Directing class can be used as one of the ways to tackle the issue above. In this class, students not only analyze the play but also challenge their creativity in order to create a theatre performance. Based on my classroom experience, I try to modify the class so that students will learn drama through Directing class.

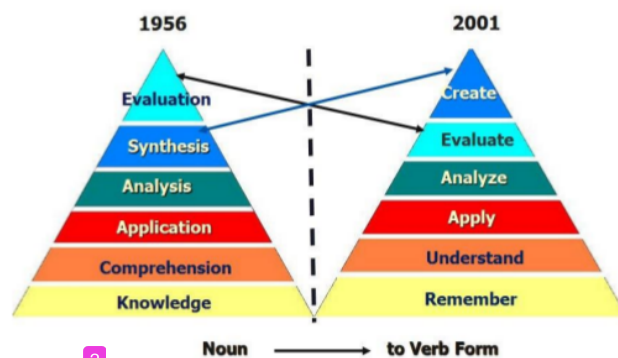
### Review of Related Literature

### Revised Bloom Taxonomy

The famous framework for outcome of teaching and learning was published as Bloom's *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* in 1956. One of the domains is cognitive. As cited from The Center of Teaching and Learning from The University of North Carolina, Charlotte, this domain is divided to:

1. Knowledge: the ability of the learner to recall, recognize terminology, ideas or theories.
2. Comprehension: The ability of the learners to translate, interpret, extrapolate without being able to implicate it to another condition.
3. Application: the ability of the learners to apply abstractions, general principles, or methods to specific concrete situations.
4. Analysis: the ability of the learners to separate a complex idea into its constituent parts and an understanding of organization and relationship between the parts.
5. Synthesis: the ability of the learners to create, mental construction of ideas and concepts from multiple sources to form complex ideas into a new, integrated, and meaningful pattern subject to given constraints.
6. Evaluation: the ability to make a judgment of ideas or methods using external evidence or self-selected criteria substantiated by observations or informed rationalizations.

However, in 2001, David R. Krathwohl published a revision of Bloom's Taxonomy titled *A Taxonomy for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment* (Armstrong, n.d.). The nouns in Bloom's changed into verb form as displayed in the pyramid below:



Source: <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy>

It indicates a more active and dynamic expectation from the taxonomy. Krathwohl then explained the verb by using gerunds and verbs to explain the process which a learner goes through when dealing with knowledge as follows:

1. Remember: recognizing and recalling
2. Understand: interpreting, exemplifying, classifying, summarizing, inferring, comparing, explaining
3. Apply: executing and implementing
4. Analyze: differentiating, organizing, attributing
5. Evaluate: checking, critiquing
6. Create: generating, planning, producing

This taxonomy is systematic in dividing the goal of learning process. Thus, it becomes one of the reasons why this taxonomy is widely used in education institution. Teachers are enabled to design the output of the lesson that they teach and measure the success as mentioned by IACBE. This output classification is going to be the measurement tools for me to classify the outcome of Directing Class that can be used to teach Drama.

### The Identification of Generation Z

According to The Center for Generational Kinetics, Generation Z was born in 1996. This generation's visual ability is far more developed. Interactive games, collaborative projects, advance organizers, challenges, and anything that they can try and see are appreciated. Due to their fast pace in changing their attention from one

subject to another, then this generation also has <sup>4</sup> inability to focus and analyze complex information or issues. This condition is called Acquired Attention Deficit Disorder according to a neuropsychiatrist at Harvard Medical School. Therefore, the attention span of the learners are shorter compare to the previous generation. With the above classification of the gen Z, thus I believe that they need an interactive activities or approach in learning.

### **Analysis**

The goal of Drama class is to introduce the western drama world. Students are expected to know and to analyze the literary work, and to discuss the connection between the drama with real life. It involves reading, readers' theatre, and discussion. Due to the challenges that I mentioned in the introduction, I would like to suggest that Directing class could be one of the alternatives to teach Drama more comprehensively. Directing class will teach the students to be directors. The one absolute duty of a director is to "tell the playwright's story as clearly and as interestingly as possible" (McCabe, p.16). In order to do that, the director needs to fully understand the play. There are several steps that the students will do in order to fulfill the Directing class. In this class, students will not only learn how to remember the required jargons and recall them, but also learn how to understand, analyze and, at the end of the class, create a performance. In other words, based on the revision of Bloom Taxonomy (2001), all of the six goals of learning could be exercised in the class.

Moreover, the approach for the teaching learning of directing class is interactive and student centered. Students play an important role in making sure that the teaching learning process effectively took place. The basic course outline is merely a guidance, thus the progress of each students may vary. Each student will have more freedom to develop themselves even though there are deadlines that they need to meet.

The difference between Drama class and Directing class is the fact that students will not be challenged to understand the play, but also to create a performance. In this case, when the students analyze the play, they are not merely doing it for the sake of the analysis. The activity enables them to create their own piece at the end of the semester. Thus, the process will be more creative and active.

In Directing class, students must be able to create two productions, one short production for the midterm and one longer production for the final. In order to choose the right plays, students are encouraged to read several titles before they decided the one that they would like to produce. In doing so, students expose themselves to many plays and read them without supervision from the lecturer. However, this process is becoming an effective process since the focus is not on the reading itself, but what comes after the reading, which is more important. It teaches the students that there is a bigger goal than a mere understanding of the play. I usually tell them that the play should be very compelling in their point of view since they will work with the play for quite a while. It becomes the students' responsibility to find the most compelling play for themselves.

After students learn the theory needed for directing, the first step of the creative process begins. Students are identifying the play, namely the characters, setting of place and time, and the things happened in the play. In this phase, students should read the play to understand it. By doing so, the students learn to remember the story. I usually give a quiz to make sure that they remember the details of the story they read. This matches the first and second goal of revised Bloom Taxonomy which is remembering. In order to understand the play as a whole, students then need to do character analysis. It helps the student director to find the characterization of the characters which later on helps him or her for the audition purpose in finding the right actors for the parts.

Character analysis enables the student director to picture the character in his or her mind. They also could not avoid to analyze the setting of place and time when creating character analysis. It will not only enable the student director to identify the proper geographical setting but also to give historical context toward the play. To check the historical background, a director needs to do a research. Research gives a freedom to the students to exercise their own freewill responsibly.

Students also analyze the plot, conflicts and theme. As stated by McCabe (2001), "Drama is characters responding to conflict. ... Finding Characters' objectives is arguably the best single approach you can find in studying the play" (p.55). Therefore, the students must be able to identify the conflicts happening in the play. These conflicts will help the students identify the theme of the play. Based on my experience in teaching Literary Genre 2, finding the theme could be a challenge for my students. In this class, students are forced to find the theme to enable them to decide the point of view. This phase will enable students to comprehend the play as a whole in order to be able to stage it. For Drama class, this is the end of the journey, but for the Directing Class this is just the beginning of the journey.

Next, students learn to find a point of view which is still part of the understanding process. This activity challenges the students' critical thinking and creativity in choosing the voice in their performance. This process is important to exercise their logical thinking and to find their own opinion. This is a bit challenging when I taught drama since the students could find the answers easily from the internet. It created a new habit where students copied someone else's opinion and felt that the opinion was better than the students' or even worse, the students forgot how to give their own opinion or, even more dangerously, students forget that their opinion is important.

The importance of point of view for student director is to set the design and style of the performance. It becomes the foundation of the Directorial Vision that they need to create after they decide the point of view. It is one of the Director's duty to "decide upon an interpretation of the script and a production concept that will shape the staging casts" (Brocket, 2011. p. 323). The key sentence which the students must answer is "I want my performance to talk about...". Again, finding their logical opinion is the most important goal of this phase.

Students, then, should create the Directorial Vision. This writing is an important document for a performance. This is the vision statement of the director toward the performance that all of the production members should abide to. In this document, student director explain the major dramatic question that the performance would like to answer. This documents also contain the purpose of the performance and the expected effect toward the audience. In this phase students are applying the knowledge that they have learned regarding Directing and concept creation. After that the student director should take a leadership role and organize the production team.

Student director creates audition session and build the team. The collaborative function takes part, students are put in the situation where they need to build the team with great teamwork. In this process, then the directorial vision can be a subject of revision. Each member of the production team will try to find the best possible version of the performance based on the DV that the student director created. However, change is inevitable, during the process, obstacles is part of reality, thus they can be a challenge for the students, facing this situation, then the students director should learn the art of compromising. Evaluation toward the concept takes place in this phase and later when the Director leads the rehearsal process, a lot of evaluation process happen.

After the team is created, rehearsals become the main focus of the director since the student director should stage the production. Usually the rehearsal will consist of several phases: "Read through and table work, staging

or blocking, working with performers, shaping the performance and integrating all the other elements of the production like scenery, costumes, lighting, sound and so on” (Brockett, 2011, p.339). In this phase, evaluation and creating process then happen in a circle. Student director will lead the actors in staging process, where the director together with the actors decide the meaning of each move on the stage and the position that the actors must pay attention to.

Student director will also lead a group of designers who are in charge for artistic sides of the performance. This involves a lot of discussions and drafting of the designs. The process of creating and evaluating are becoming the main focus of this phase. It encourages the Gen Z to use their multitasking ability. The focus of the class is heavily on the students. They have their freedom to create and the lecturer becomes more of a facilitator.

During the rehearsals, students involved will be trained to be discipline and exercise their time management skill. Discipline is mandatory since theatre is never an individual project; it is always a collective project. Thus, as a leader, it is especially mandatory for the student director to respect the designed rehearsal and timeline for the production. To make things more challenging, the student director should lead the team to follow the same values. The time management skill is needed to make sure that the production’s timeline can be met.

In this phase also, student director will be trained in practical way to overcome differences and solve problems that might occur. Human relation is the keyword in order to successfully stage the performance. In order to do so, interpersonal and intra personal skills play a very important role. Through group work, each individual will develop their communication skills.

Based on my explanation above, then the comparison between the Drama Class and Directing Class is in the table below.

	Drama Class	Directing Class
Focus	Understanding drama	Understanding drama Creating the performance
Learning Style	Students focus on the analysis	Student-centered, analysis is the tool to create a new piece
Time allocation	More time	Limited time, since the students need to do more phases. Thus students need to do it in a fast pace
Type of responsibility	Individual Group work is possible	Team work is mandatory, individual work is only the foundation and first part of the class.
Additional skills learned	Critical thinking	Critical thinking, leadership, interpersonal skill, intrapersonal skill, problem solving.

### Conclusion

Directing class could serve as a better option in teaching drama for students who belong to Gen Z. It gives a wider spectrum for the students’ learning process. It offers more skills that are necessary for them to take part in this era, such as team work, time management, leadership, problem solving, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. Apart from understanding a drama script, students are challenged to lead a team. As a consequence, they need to solve problems occurred in the team. In doing so, they automatically exercise inter and intra personal skills.

**References**

Armstrong, P. (n.d.). Bloom's Taxonomy. Retrieved September 10, 2016, from <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-subpages/blooms-taxonomy>

Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. (n.d.). Retrieved September 9, 2016, from <http://iacbe.org/oa-blooms-taxonomy.asp>

Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. (n.d.). Retrieved September 10, 2016, from <http://teaching.uncc.edu/learning-resources/articles-books/best-practice/goals-objectives/blooms-educational-objectives>

Brockett, O. G., & Brockett, O. G. (2011). *The Essential Theatre* (10th ed.). Boston: Wadsworth.

Learn About Gen Z (aka Generation Z) on GEN HQ. (n.d.). Retrieved September 8, 2016, from <http://genhq.com/igen-gen-z-generation-z-centennials-info/>

McCabe, T. (2001). *Mis-directing the play: An argument against contemporary theatre*. Chicago: I.R. Dec.

Singh, A. (2014). Challenges and Issues of Generation Z. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management IOSRJBM*, 16(7), 59-63. doi:10.9790/487x-16715963

# Directing Class: Alternative for Teaching Drama

---

## ORIGINALITY REPORT

---

7%

SIMILARITY INDEX

6%

INTERNET SOURCES

4%

PUBLICATIONS

5%

STUDENT PAPERS

---

## PRIMARY SOURCES

---

1	<a href="http://www.grip-network.org">www.grip-network.org</a> Internet Source	2%
2	<a href="http://elearningwk3.blogspot.com">elearningwk3.blogspot.com</a> Internet Source	1%
3	<a href="http://www.semanticscholar.org">www.semanticscholar.org</a> Internet Source	1%
4	<a href="http://mdle.net">mdle.net</a> Internet Source	1%
5	Submitted to University of Hull Student Paper	1%
6	Submitted to Colorado Technical University Online Student Paper	1%

---

Exclude quotes On

Exclude matches < 1%

Exclude bibliography On