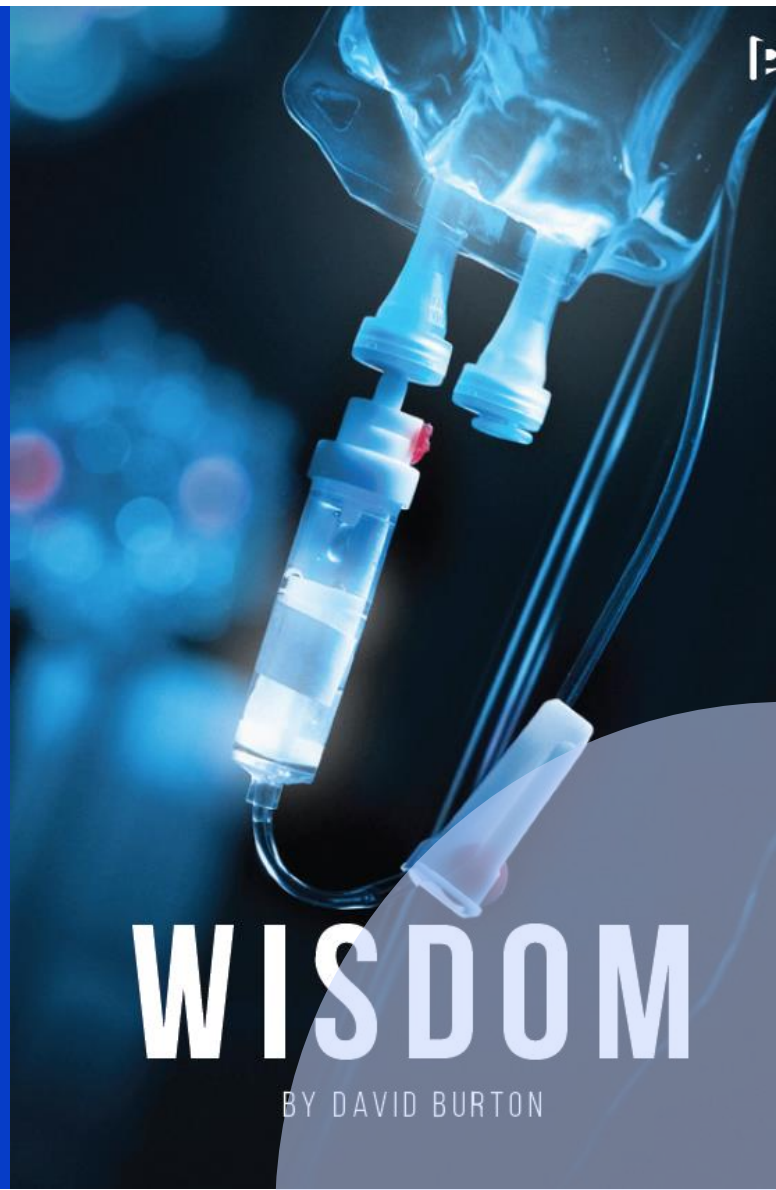




AUSTRALIAN
PLAYS
TRANSFORM



WISDOM

BY DAVID BURTON

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EDUCATION RESOURCE

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INTRODUCTION

This resource has been developed by Australian Plays Transform to illustrate some approaches to teaching a drama text to English students in Years 7-10. However, the resource can be adapted for use in other subject areas and year levels.

These teachers' notes are designed to support the development of students' understanding of core textual concepts of theme, narrative, and perspective in relation to the close study of a single text. It includes a detailed synopsis and a series of pre- and post-reading activities.

AUSTRALIAN PLAYS TRANSFORM

Australian Plays Transform (APT) is Australia's national play development and publication organisation. It hosts the world's largest online showcase and searchable database of the best Australian playwriting. APT seeks new voices for new times, develops plays that change the national story, links them to production, publishes them and promotes them here and around the world.

<https://apt.org.au/for-educators/>

This resource was developed by Zoe Hogan.

TEACHING DRAMA TEXTS IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

In Years 7-10, English students in NSW are required to engage meaningfully with at least two drama texts in each Stage. Engaging with Australian plays provides a wonderful opportunity for students to experience texts by Australian authors, including texts that explore a range of cultural, social and gender perspectives.

Drama refers to a piece of literature intended to be performed in front of an audience. Drama texts differ from many other written texts studied in English because a drama script is intended to be fully realised in performance. To understand how drama texts work, it is useful for students to become familiar with the *elements of drama*, which are combined to create *dramatic meaning*. The elements of drama are atmosphere, audience engagement, focus, language, moment, movement, place, rhythm, role & character, situation, sound, space, structure, symbol, tension, and time. A visual reference for the *elements of drama* is located [here](#).

While Australian plays can be studied and analysed as written texts, we encourage students to consider how drama texts could be performed in front of an audience. This resource includes a range of written, creative, and embodied activities for students in the English classroom.

WISDOM BY DAVID BURTON

Wisdom is a politically charged black comedy that unpacks the value society places on youth, propaganda, and its effect on the public perception of a world in crisis.

In the not-too-distant future, coming of age is a little different. Thanks to a fantastic scientific discovery, wisdom no longer comes with age. Wisdom now comes with a strict pharmaceutical regimen, and it's all government mandated. But an idyllic, strictly regulated existence free of the shackles of ageing isn't all it's cracked up to be. When side effects start to spread and citizens become aware of the lengths the state will go to maintain order, the only answer is revolution.

Originally written for Queensland Theatre's The Scene Project, *Wisdom* is a versatile work for young performers which can be pulled apart and put back together to suit any classroom. Queensland Theatre's The Scene Project involves scripts that can be performed with a cast of anywhere between four and twenty people. All roles are gender neutral and the total length of the play is about an hour.

ABOUT THE WRITER – DAVID BURTON

David Burton is an award-winning writer from Brisbane. He has written over thirty professionally produced theatrical works, including several pieces for the youth and education sector, and directed productions for the Queensland Music Festival. His memoir, *How to Be Happy*, won the Text Prize for Young Adult and Children's Writing in 2014. *The Man in the Water* is his first novel.

ABOUT THE PLAY

Wisdom was first produced by Queensland Theatre as part of The Scene Project, performed throughout Queensland from August to October 2020, directed by Michelle Miall.

“*Wisdom* is about empowering young people, positioning them to question their own perceptions of maturity, justice and decision-making.”

Travis Dowling, Associate Director, Queensland Theatre

SYNOPSIS

1. An Introduction

A Chorus of four people (A, B, C, D) speaks directly to the audience, announcing that they will soon receive 'Wisdom', and to watch a short presentation.

2. A Short Presentation

A presentation about Wisdom. A scientist, an historian, a model, an athlete, and the Prime Minister appear. We learn that Wisdom is a compulsory injection of new data into an individual's DNA to stop physical ageing. When they receive Wisdom, everyone also receives a government tattoo to verify their actual age.

3. A Terrorist

The Chorus warns the audience not to look up to someone called 'Lu Augustine', who they say is a terrorist who has been 'dealt with'. They say the government has decided to release some of her story, and the audience is the first to hear it.

4. The Death of Juno Augustine

A doctor called Juno is dying from a nerve agent, slipped into her coffee by an assassin. Her child Lu kneels over her. Juno gives Lu a note and then says her last word: "Run." Lu runs.

5. A Lie

We see a scene between Juno and Lu in the past – Lu asks her mother why they no longer speak of her father. People say Lu's father was a cult leader who killed himself. Juno avoids answering the question and says that he spoke out publicly against Wisdom. Lu is due to receive her final injection soon, and Juno says that as a doctor, she can administer it. Lu asks her mother if she has really received her prior doses of Wisdom.

The Chorus says that Lu's parents were criminal outliers. They tell us to watch as after the death of her mother, Lu flees to the house of her best friend.

6. Pho's Place

Lu arrives at Pho's place, interrupting Pho's livestream makeup tutorial. She tells Pho that her mother was poisoned and that she thinks she has never had Wisdom and will therefore grow old. Pho remembers the livestream and switches it off.

Pho's sibling Dei enters, having seen the livestream. They realise the livestream has gone viral – comments on the video say that the government are monsters and it's time for change. Lu says that it's time to overturn the government, kill them all, and rejoice in their blood. The actor playing Lu stops, steps out of role and says that the last line doesn't feel right. The rest of the chorus turns on this actor and says that they shouldn't question the official record.

7. The Next Day

At Pho's house, Martha (Pho and Dei's mother) questions them about Lu's whereabouts. She suggests that Lu and her family are terrorists and says that not taking Wisdom is a serious offence. They discuss Wisdom – it has taken pressure off the medical industry and strengthened the Australian economy, as Australia produces and exports the drug. Pho's mother tells the story of her grandmother who died a painful death after breaking her hip, before Wisdom was given to everyone. She says her children have never seen real pain, so they don't understand how lucky they are to get Wisdom.

There is a knock on the door, and Lu appears out of hiding. The door bursts open and there are gun shots. Pho's mother jumps in front of the bullet aimed at Lu.

8. The Darwin Theory

The Chorus tells us that Martha dies, and Lu, Pho, and Dei flee. They say that Martha died because of Lu's cowardice. They say that Lu and her sympathisers were killed or captured, and the rule of law is a matter for adults, not children.

One of the chorus members, A (the same person who has been playing the role of Lu), says that this is not how it really happened, and questions why the soldiers shot Martha indiscriminately when Lu posed no immediate threat to them. A also begins talking about Darwin Theory, which suggests that the cumulative effect of Wisdom is leading to birth defects, cancer, and psychiatric diseases. Another member of the Chorus assures the audience that Darwin Theory is fringe science. A insists that they play a recording of a meeting in the Prime Minister's office, to show how they responded to the 'terrorist threat' of Lu and her friends.

9. The Cabinet

We see a meeting between the Prime Minister and several Ministers. They describe Lu as a national security threat and say they can deny any knowledge of her mother's assassination. They discuss how they will manage the story politically and in the media.

It is clear that Juno tricked the system by not giving Lu Wisdom and was only found out when a nurse informed on her. The Prime Minister says that Lu will be a punchline by next week – "The freak who wanted to get older". They agree that the crisis is manageable because most Australians believe that Wisdom is too good to give up. They are notified of the current location of Lu and her friends and say that a squad unit will be sent to their location immediately.

10. Who's in Charge Here?

We return to the four-member Chorus (A, B, C and D), but A is questioning the response of the Prime Minister, and B is now agreeing that the response of Australia's leadership is not okay. C and D warn them against talking of revolution.

11. Done Being Polite

We see Lu, Pho, and Dei on the run in a forest. Lu takes out the note that Juno gave to her as she was dying – it has the address of a sanctuary a few hours' walk away. As 'terrorists on the run', they are at the centre of a media storm. One news story says that Lu is a cult leader holding two teenagers hostage. Another story says that Pho and Dei's mum threatened officers with a gun.

Lu is angry and starts filming herself – she says that she is going to grow up and age, because she has never had Wisdom. She says that teenagers are fighting back, and if their bodies are good enough to freeze in time, then their minds and hearts are good enough "to tell you when you're wrong".

Again, the message goes viral, and again their location is tracked by the authorities. Lu, Pho, and Dei begin running as shots are fired. Dei takes all of their phones, begins to run away, and is captured.

12. Blood in the Water

We return to the Chorus, but this time they are arguing amongst themselves about whether Lu is a terrorist or a hero, and whether Wisdom is a threat or a benefit to society. We see a series of scenes that explores the impacts of Wisdom:

- a) Service – three high school students encounter two 'adolescents' who they discover are posing as students to re-live the greatest years of their life. It is revealed that two of the three high school students are also far older than they appear to be.
- b) Big Brother – a scene between two siblings, one of whom will age normally, and the other who will not age. The legislation making Wisdom compulsory was introduced in the year that separates them. The ageing sibling talks about how they will grow old, get sick, and become a burden to their ageless sibling.
- c) Hit Subscribe – a Pirate is recording a vlog after their final Wisdom shot, but grows increasingly confused and distressed.

13. Whistleblower

Having seen these scenes, the Chorus continue to disagree about whether the impact of Wisdom is negative or positive. B says they have other information that the audience will want to see.

14. Whistleblower's Story

We see the Foreign Minister and their child discussing Lu's video. The Minister tries to persuade their child to share information about Lu's whereabouts, and the protest groups that are emerging. They argue. The child agrees with Lu that Wisdom should be optional. The Foreign Minister grounds them but is interrupted by a phone call. She leaves her laptop open, and the child retrieves files from it.

15. The Garden

A flashback – Lu’s father Adam is teaching a science class in a rainforest. He is telling the students that in an ecosystem, everything is connected. They find a dead bird on the ground and Adam uses the body as an opportunity to teach the class about death and decay, and why it is so important in a healthy ecosystem.

16. The Truth

The Chorus explain that this incident (Adam’s lesson about death and decay) became a media scandal. We see a conversation between Adam and an assassin, who offers him a poisoned drink (the same method that killed Juno).

17. Kick-started Mayhem

The Chorus explain that Pho and Lu got to the safe house, which was fully stocked with food, electricity, water, internet, and television. They see that their actions have sparked a mass protest movement, with students leaving school to protest and attack Wisdom factories. Pho and Lu discuss the best way forward – Pho suggests that they should bomb Parliament, whereas Lu is in favour of non-violent advocacy. They see Dei on the television, imprisoned. They resolve to intervene.

18. Riot

The Chorus explain that there are violent riots in the city, led by young people. Violence escalates and the army begins to fire at the protestors. Lu is recognised by a soldier who shoots at her, but Pho jumps in front of the bullet. Lu gets inside the Parliament building, alone.

19. The Choice

The Chorus disagree on what actually happened next – it appears that Lu was arrested (or surrendered voluntarily), but no one is sure where she ended up. They say that there is one final piece of evidence – a video that was made for Lu.

20. Imagine She Did

The Chorus invite us to imagine that Lu got into the Prime Minister’s office and found the video file. The video is from her father, saying that he never wanted to leave her, but he was being targeted for teaching his students about entropy (how things move towards disorder and decay). He says that he loves her and wants the world to be better for her.

21. Not Today

The Chorus tells the audience that their Wisdom injections are now ready, and from today, they will be considered adults and full members of society. As D announces that the injections are ready to commence, A says one final word to the audience: “Run”.

ACTIVITY: GETTING TO KNOW THE PLAY

This activity is designed to introduce students to the narrative of the play through exploring six key scenes. Suggested scenes for this activity are:

- 2. A Short Presentation (p.17-20)
- 6. Pho's Place (p.28-31)
- 8. The Darwin Theory (p.37-41)
- 11. Done Being Polite (p.48-52)
- 15. The Garden (p.72-73)
- 17. Riot (p.80-82)

Divide students into six groups – each group receives one of the scenes above. Students prepare a presentation of their scene for the class. To prepare their scene, students take on the roles of actors, production designer, and director.

Where dialogue is given to 'chorus', the lines may be distributed among students however they like – including saying lines in unison, overlapping, etc. The role of the 'production designer' is to identify/include any key props or costume elements that will help convey the story (encourage students to consider symbolism). The role of the 'director' is to provide guidance during rehearsal/preparation of the scene, and to consider how the scene as a whole conveys dramatic meaning.

After watching each scene, the class can discuss the following questions:

- What happened in the scene?
- What emotion/s were conveyed in the scene?
- What directorial choices were made in presenting the scenes? Did you find them effective – if so, why?

Further resources

Queensland Theatre has produced an excellent education package on *Wisdom*, including videos, which can be accessed [here](#). A live recording of a performance of the play can also be purchased.

Related texts

Excerpts from *Wisdom* can also be used in a multiple text study. The following texts are suitable for Years 7-10 students and include thematic links to *Wisdom*:

- *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding - this seminal novel about a group of adolescents who attempt to govern themselves provides a rich counterpoint to the adolescents in *Wisdom*, who are seeking autonomy and agency over their own lives.
- *The Watertower* and *Beneath the Surface* by Gary Crew – a dark and mysterious picture book series for young adults that follows the story of two boys in a rural town who uncover a powerful secret about why the people of the town are changing. These texts introduce dystopian themes of young people encountering powerful authority and mystery. The ambiguity of the texts also resonates with the ways in which *Wisdom* asks the audience to think critically about the scenes they are watching.
- *Black Sun/Blood Moon* by Chris Bendall – an Australian play for young people following the intertwining stories of Maddy, a ten-year-old climate champion, and Katie, the assistant of a climate-denying politician, as they set out to save the planet. This play explores the determination of young climate protesters in urging the public and adults in their lives to acknowledge truth, a theme that also occurs in *Wisdom*.
- *Oxford Treasury of Time Poems*, edited by Michael Harrison and Christopher Stuart-Clark – this poetry collection features poems by Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Heaney, Rossetti, Hughes, Frost, and Dickinson that explore different aspects of time, including growing old. Select poems will resonate with *Wisdom*, where the audience is asked to consider the personal, social, and moral implications of ageing.

THEME

A theme is a statement about life, arising from the interplay of key elements of the text such as plot, character, setting and language. These work together in a coherent way to achieve the purpose of the text.

Theme differs from the topic of a text (war, the sea) or an idea addressed by a text (prejudice, friendship) in that the theme conveys an attitude or value about an idea (By accepting difference we are enriched. True friendship survives adversity).

At its most basic level a theme may be regarded as the message or even the moral of a text. Themes may be used for a didactic purpose or may add a philosophical dimension, inviting us to think about our place in the world. A theme is a statement about human experience that is profound and which responders may accept or reject, depending on their own worldview.

STAGE 4

Students understand that theme reflects or challenges values.

They learn that

- themes are statements about the ideas, explicit or implied, in a text
- themes are reinforced by choice of language and imagery
- themes can highlight social and cultural similarities and differences
- thematic interpretations arise from personal experience and culture.

From English Textual Concepts, ETA & NSW Department of Education (2016)

KEY THEMES

As the title suggests, the concept of wisdom is a central theme of the play. In the world of the play, the word ‘wisdom’ has been co-opted as the name of a drug which, when injected at sporadic intervals, stops the process of decay and the appearance of ageing.

PRE-READING ACTIVITY: INTRODUCING THE THEMES OF THE PLAY

In groups of 4 or 5, students receive one of the following words on a large piece of paper:

- Wisdom
- Government
- Surveillance
- Youth
- Citizen
- Ageing

Students write down any associated words or phrases they can think of. After two minutes, each group moves to the next theme word/piece of paper. Continue rotating through the theme words until all students have contributed to each piece of paper. You might like to ask each group to share the most interesting words/phrases for each theme word (as you study the play, students can add new ideas, concepts and vocabulary to the mind maps).

In the same groups, students now create a freeze frame depicting their understanding of their theme word. A freeze frame is a still image created using our bodies – students can choose to depict their theme word in a representational scene or using a more symbolic approach. One by one, each group shares their freeze frame.

Encourage students to reflect on what the freeze frame conveys about the theme – does it have a didactic purpose (a moral or educational lesson) or a philosophical dimension? For example, a freeze frame of ‘ageing’ could show that ageing is associated with wisdom and eldership, or unwanted physical decay.

Predictive writing: Based on our understanding of these theme words, what do you think the play will be about? Students write down their story ideas.

POST-READING ACTIVITY: REFLECTING ON THE THEMES OF THE PLAY

As a class, return to the theme words and mind maps created at the start of the unit. Students reflect on and discuss the message of the play.

- Has your understanding of any of these concepts changed or evolved?
- What do you think the playwright intended for us to reflect on about our place in the world?

In small groups, students make a freeze frame showing what they think the message/moral of *Wisdom* is – what is the playwright David Burton trying to say about the themes of wisdom, government, surveillance, youth, citizen, and ageing? Students can also collaboratively write a ‘caption’ for their freeze frame.

WISDOM

In the play, different characters articulate various attitudes about wisdom – both in terms of the drug and the quality/trait. The following excerpts from *Wisdom* highlight some of these various attitudes:

MARTHA: Just because you've both had Wisdom doesn't mean you've lived a life. Seen things. Understood how complicated the world really is. You haven't seen pain. I've protected you from that. (p.35)

D: You kids want a secret ticket to maturity? No one knows what they're doing. Ever. Congratulations. No one has figured it out. There isn't a magic key they hand you with your Wisdom injection. Life's a mystery. (p.46)

ADAM: This is precisely why death is so important. Without death, there is no true life. Life and death are not opposites - they are the same thing. And in this ecosystem, like every ecosystem, there is no true ending, only transformation. We are each connected, and constantly transforming, decaying, growing. (p.73)

ACTIVITY: SCENE WRITING

Students choose one of the above excerpts (or another of their choice from the play) with which they identify. Students write a dialogue between themselves and one (or more) of the characters in the play explaining their perspective on the theme of wisdom. Encourage students to think about how their personal experiences, society, and culture have shaped their perspective of wisdom. Students can then present their work to the class as a scene.

NARRATIVE

Narrative is fundamental to thinking. When we think, we think in narrative form. Narrative can refer to a story itself or to the conventions by which we communicate and understand it. These conventions are the way we construct a world that sets up and depends on expectations of human behaviour to amplify it. They include the selection and organisation of actions and events into a plot and a suite of individualised or stock characters to carry the plot forward. A narrative is usually structured in such a way as to invite responder involvement through recounting challenges and characters' attitudes towards them and moving towards resolution.

Narrative is a part of everyday communication to convey any message, be it political (an annual budget), commercial (a fashion collection) or institutional (public health warnings). In these messages, the elements of narrative may not be obvious and are inferred through identification with the situation.

STAGE 4

Students understand that narrative shapes and is shaped by one's view of the world.

They learn that

- *their own experience and culture influence their responses to stories*
- *the conventions of narrative are combined to engage the responder emotionally and intellectually with events and*
- *characters depicted in the story and with ideas and values implied by the story*
- *conventions of narrative are adapted to different forms, modes and media, and to fiction and non fiction to achieve these effects*
- *close consideration and analysis of stories can bring to light subtleties in the text.*

From English Textual Concepts, ETA & NSW Department of Education (2016)

NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

Wisdom has two main strands of narrative: the story of Lu and her struggle against the influence of Wisdom on her life, and the meta-narrative of the Chorus, as we see them debate how to tell us (the audience) the story of Lu.

There are many narrative structures, one of which is known as Freytag's pyramid, developed in response to classical Greek tragedy and Shakespearean drama. Playwright David Burton was influenced by Greek drama – see quote below.

“*Wisdom* is a play ultimately about what it means to be a good citizen. The character's names have allusions to many Western myths and histories (Juno, Lucretia, Adam, Phobos, Deimos, Martha) by no accident. The play utilises a chorus to echo Greek drama in part because the play also resonates with ideas that the Ancient Greeks were obsessed with: democracy and civil freedoms.”

David Burton, playwright

ACTIVITY: MAPPING THE NARRATIVE

Students consider the dramatic action of *Wisdom* as it relates to Freytag's pyramid of narrative structure:

- Exposition
- Rising action
- Climax
- Falling action
- Resolution (or catastrophe, if the story is a tragedy)

In five groups, students receive one of the above areas of Freytag's pyramid (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution). Each group identifies the scenes in the play that they feel corresponds to their section of the pyramid, and how these scenes engage the audience emotionally and intellectually. Groups present their ideas – there may be some difference of opinion among groups as to where one section of the structure shifts to the next. Encourage students to justify their choices.

CONCLUDING THE STORY

At the start of the play, the objective of the Chorus is to prepare (and persuade) the audience to be injected with Wisdom. Eventually, the story of the Chorus becomes increasingly important as it is clear that they are deliberately shaping the narrative we are watching in politically motivated ways.

As the play progresses, the differing agendas of certain members of the Chorus gradually emerge (see p.13 of the script for an overview) – each Chorus member wants to show or omit certain aspects of the story so as to shape the audience’s perceptions.

ACTIVITY: CONCLUDING THE STORY

As a class, read the final two scenes of the play: 19. *Imagine She Did* (p.85-86) and 20. *Not Today* (p.87-88). These two scenes are both resolutions – ‘*Imagine She Did*’ is a conclusion to Lu’s story and ‘*Not Today*’ is a conclusion (of sorts) to the story of the Chorus.

In ‘*Not Today*’, the Chorus members speak directly to the audience (in theatre, we call this ‘breaking the fourth wall’, where actors ‘break through’ the invisible, imaginary wall that separates actors from the audience) as if they are about to inject them with the drug Wisdom.

The final word of the play, “Run”, is a direct appeal to the audience from Chorus member A to avoid being injected with Wisdom.

Think-pair-share: In pairs, students discuss the following questions:

- Why do you think the playwright has ended the play with the word “run”?
- How do you think the audience would respond to this scene?
- In your opinion, is this a satisfying end to the story? Why/why not?

PERSPECTIVE

Perspective is a lens through which we learn to see the world; it shapes what we see and the way we see it. The lens can clarify, magnify, distort or blur what we see. By changing the position of the lens, different aspects of the text may be foregrounded. In this way, perspective provides a dynamic basis for the relationship between composer, text and responder.

Perspective includes the values that the responder and composer bring to a text. In a text these values are expressed and/or implied through the composer's language and structure which may position the responder to accept them. By adopting different perspectives, a responder can bring to light underlying values in the text and construct meanings which may challenge, confirm or modify the original reading of a text. Applying different perspectives may also challenge, confirm or modify the responder's and composer's own values.

STAGE 4

Students understand that perspectives convey values.

They learn that

- *language reveals and shapes our attitudes towards people, events, groups and ideas*
- *shared perspectives are markers of groups*
- *perspectives in texts may test the responder's own moral and ethical positions.*

From English Textual Concepts, ETA & NSW Department of Education (2016)

THE CHORUS

The Chorus plays an important role in shaping the audience's perspective in *Wisdom* – they have the power to clarify, magnify, distort or blur what we see. The Chorus can be performed by four actors (A, B, C, D), but the lines can also be divided up among many actors.

In the theatre of Ancient Greece, the chorus was a group of performers who provided background and summary information to the audience to help them understand what was going on in the performance. At times, the chorus may have represented the voice of society in the play, expressing popular opinions and judgments on the dramatic action.

PRE-READING ACTIVITY: THE ROLE OF THE CHORUS

Think-pair-share: Students watch the 5-minute video '[Modern Interpretations of Greek Chorus](#)' by National Theatre and take notes. In pairs, students discuss the following questions:

- What is the purpose of a Chorus in theatre?
- How does the Chorus engage the audience?
- Why might a contemporary playwright include a Chorus in a play?

In *Wisdom*, the Chorus shows the audience select moments in the story of Lu Augustine. In a sense, they control the perspective of the story, at times clarifying, magnifying and distorting what we (as the audience) can see about what happened.

This perspective begins to fracture as the four members of the Chorus (A, B, C, D) begin to take on different attitudes towards the story of *Wisdom*. The playwright David Burton specifies in the notes to the script that the chorus (which can be made up of many people) become split into the following camps:

- Camp A is the first cast member/s to be convinced to side with Lu's plight.
- Camp B is curious about Lu's plight and will eventually side with Camp A.
- Camp C is a little apathetic, perhaps even distracted at times, but eventually becomes convinced to side with Lu.
- Camp D sides with the 'official' version of events and doesn't budge.

ACTIVITY: READERS' THEATRE

As a class, read Scene 12 – Blood in the Water (p.53-54). In this scene, the four Chorus members (or 'camps') no longer present a united perspective but are arguing over the positive and negative impacts of Wisdom injections.

In groups of 4, students each take on a Chorus role (A, B, C or D). They experiment with how to convey perspectives through movement and vocal qualities (you can also do this activity as a whole class, assigning sections of the class as different Chorus groups). Students can consider the following aspects of movement in their presentation of the scene: gesture, facial expression, posture, use of space, use of levels (e.g. high or low) to indicate status. They can also consider the following aspects of voice:

- Volume (loud, soft, etc)
- Rate (fast, slow, etc)
- Pitch (high, low, etc)
- Tone/expression (shy, confident, sad, happy, etc)

Students annotate their script with their choices, rehearse, and present their reading. As a class, reflect on the perspective of each Chorus member and how this was conveyed through movement and vocal expression. How does the delivery of the text shape your attitude towards the Chorus members?

Follow up writing activity: Students write a paragraph from the perspective of the Chorus member they just embodied in the previous activity (either A, B, C, or D).

ACTIVITY: TOWN MEETING

A 'Town Meeting' is a semi-structured drama activity, where students take on specific roles to explore a particular issue. This activity helps students understand how perspective is shaped and informed by values and moral and ethical positions.

Explain to the students that as a class, you will be holding a Town Meeting to determine whether *Wisdom* should continue to be used in Australia. Students brainstorm which stakeholder groups should be present at this meeting (for example, government, youth activists, concerned parents, pharmaceutical company, etc).

In small groups, students are allocated a particular role and prepare their points for the meeting. Emphasise that as this is a drama activity, they need to 'step into role' as members of the stakeholder group, and this may involve taking on an opinion which differs from their own. Encourage students to consider how they can use language to reveal and shape their attitudes towards *Wisdom* (for example, how would a government representative speak? How would a concerned parent speak?). As the teacher, you can also take on a role, usually as the host or facilitator of the meeting. Have fun with it – giving your character a name and attitude will encourage students to also get into role.

Each group gets a chance to present their perspective at the meeting (encourage each student in every group to share at least one point). After all the groups have shared, you can choose to end the meeting by taking a vote on a way forward, or thanking everyone for attending and informing them that they will be advised of a policy decision in the coming days.

Extension activity: After the meeting, ask students to write a persuasive piece of writing based on their character's perspective in the meeting.

Reference List

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