



Further Explorations

1.Exploring the characters dilemmas - Teacher in Role

Aim: Teacher to take on roles from the play to share a character's dilemma directly with their class requiring them to give the character advice or challenge.

How to go into role

It doesn't require great acting skills, just a clear picture of what you are trying to explore. You can play men or women and you don't have to change your voice, just present the attitude of that character ie they might be nervous, angry about something or enthusiastic.

Tell the class that you are going to take on the role of a character and describe where they are when the class meets them. Give them a clear signal for the transition into character, which might be going into a freeze and bringing it to life, or putting on a small piece of costume like a scarf. Get the class to offer you advice and you can come out of role at any time to discuss the situation before going back into it.

Role # 1 Meeting Laura (Billy's Mum)

Preparing the class for meeting Laura

I want us to meet Laura to find out what it is like to be Billy's Mum. I am going to be her in a moment at the point where she has found out that Billy has not been invited to end of Year 6 Party at Connor's.

Meeting Laura

Laura: I found this (holds up a card) in Billy's bag, an invitation "a final celebration for the whole class" at Connor's house. Except this wasn't for Billy, it's got Emilia's name on it. When I asked Billy where his was, he said he didn't get one. How can they do that? How is that right? I mean it's not the whole class is it? It's the whole class except Billy invite. I've got a good mind to go round there and tell Connor's Mum how that makes Billy feel. Do you think I should?

What the class can explore through meeting Laura?

Is Laura's anger serving Billy's interests or hers? When should parents stop protecting their children?

Role # 2 Meeting Patrick (Billy's Brother)

Preparing the class to meet Patrick

I want us to meet Patrick to find out what it is like to be Billy's older brother. I am going to be him at the point where he has covered himself in a blanket on the sofa after being kept awake half the night by Billy in his bedroom.

Meeting Patrick

Now I can't get to sleep! That's why I moved out and lived with Dad, you don't get any peace with him around. He doesn't do anything he's supposed to do, he never listens, it doesn't even go in one ear and out the other, it just doesn't go in because there's too much me,me,me going on. He eats when he wants to and he just has Mum wrapped around his little finger – well not me. No way. I'm not looking after him when he comes to my school next year. If Mum asks me to keep an eye out for him – I'm saying no I'm not doing it. You've got to draw the line somewhere haven't you?

What the class can explore through meeting Patrick

Can Billy's needs and Patrick's needs both be met or is one of them always going to lose out?

2. What do you think is the most important thing that Billy learns from his obsession with bees? – Ask the class to sort out the statements into a column going from most important to least important.

Aim: An opportunity for the class to think about whether it is important to learn hard facts or life lessons ie what it teaches you about yourself and the world.

All the statements below are quotes from Billy in the play. Print the following statements out on separate A4 sheets and make enough sets so that a group of five or six children can work together to arrange these statements into a column. There is no right answer; rather this is an opportunity for a debate about the importance of facts or self-awareness when it comes to learning in relation to Billy but also for them.

- Every bee is born just knowing what to do. Knowing who they are in the world.
 - If bees swarm and can't find a home then they starve and die.
 - This is the wax where they store the honey, which never spoils.
 - A beekeeper needs to first detect that a hive might swarm, but the harder part is *stopping* the swarm.
 - And this (*pulls out jar with bee*) is a worker bee. Billy, who I named after me. I brought her into school once, wore my beesuit too. Everyone started calling me Billy Bee after that, which, like, isn't even a proper insult.
 - Imagine there were a load of bees in my head doing the waggle dance, passing messages to bees in different parts of my head , bzzzz-pow – that's how the brain works to tell the body what to do – by passing messages back and forth.
 - "We heard that your like the bee whisperer and 50 thousand bees just sat on your head and none stung you." Which is sorta true.
 - The thing when working on a new hive is absolute focus.
 - Now I'm like a bug in a jar with a sticker for everyone to look at and examine and talk about like I'm not there
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3. Hopes and fears for Billy's future - Pupil in role as Billy, the class questioning and the teacher facilitating

Aim: through exploring Billy's hopes and fears for his future, the children are exploring their own.

Preparing the class to meet Billy

Mr Harry from the new school has come to visit Billy and said that he is going to make sure that he is alright in Year 7. But Billy has a mixture of fears and hopes about starting in the new school. We are going to meet Billy in the communal garden for the flats with his new beehive, which has no bees yet (place a chair in front of the class to represent the bee hive and you could ask the class what else might be in the garden) and here is Billy looking inside the hive (place pupil next to chair). What questions would you want to ask him about going to the new school? (collect the first three questions and allocate them to pupils to ask Billy)

Meeting Billy

Billy, I can see you've got your new beehive, are you looking forward to having bees in it? (allow Billy to answer)
Billy there are other people here who would like to ask you some questions.

Facilitating the pupil in role as Billy

Tell the class to say Billy's name first before asking the question, so Billy knows where the question is coming from. As facilitator you have the power to stop the action, and give someone else the chance of being Billy or maybe use another character to question such as a girl from Billy's class.

4. How could you change a classroom to make it alright for Billy? – a drawing and presentation activity

Aim: Through the concrete task of moving the furniture around in a classroom to make it more “Billy – friendly” it can begin to spark ideas about different ways to learn and to teach.

Setting the task

Have a discussion about the typical classroom layout that Billy will be learning in at his new high school. Now you know Billy, how would you change it to make him feel alright in this space? You can re-arrange the furniture, take it out of the room and add new features as long as it doesn't blow the school budget!

Guidance for task

Give large sheets of paper to groups to draw out their “Billy friendly” classrooms and then ask them to present their ideas back to the class. You could give them license to be fantastical or keep it real with budget constraints. When they present back interrogate why they think this would be a better learning environment and would it suit other pupils just as much as Billy?

Resources for task

Here are some quotes (all taken from adhdkidsrock.com) from children with ADHD describing their experiences in the classroom that you might want to share with the class before setting the exercise:

I want to describe that feeling of being so bored it's physically painful. Like you have to escape the feeling at all cost. For me boredom is the same as extreme physical stress. I think this is why kids with ADHD that have this feeling do dumb things and get into trouble

I've struggled with teachers liking me. For most classes I “have” to be there and my ADHD brain fights doing anything I “have” to do. On a good day, school is boring.

Bottom line, ADHD brains do great when it's something we are interested in. We are not being a brat or picky or bad, it's just how we are wired.