Introduction
This scheme of work explores the use of mime, slapstick and physical theatre as well as learning lazzi routines from commedia dell’arte. The purpose of the scheme is for students to learn how to communicate without dialogue as well as focus on physical comedy.

It is intended to be delivered to KS3 and KS4, the overall objective being that students will have a basic knowledge of theatre and film history from the physical comedy genre. Students will devise and perform their own comedy play using the skills taught from the scheme of work.

Learning objectives
By the end of this scheme students will have learnt:
- To explore comedy and mime
- To demonstrate an understanding of how humans communicate without speech
- To know and understand the genres of mime, physical theatre and commedia dell’arte
- To demonstrate skills through a devised comedy play
- To understand and demonstrate how to develop own and others’ work
- To assess own work and work of others.

Resources
All the text used is listed in the Resources at the end of this scheme of work.
Resource 1 is a student booklet that can be used:
- To consolidate learning
- To check what the student understands of the work covered
- To set homework tasks
- For teacher assessment of the student
- For student self and peer assessment.

Lesson 1: Mime

Learning objectives
By the end of the lesson students will have learnt:
- To explain a mime and demonstrate communication of character through movement, gesture and expression
- A basic history of mime
- How drama can be conveyed through silence and movement.

Starter activity
Resource 4, slides 1 to 4. Discuss with students PowerPoint slides 1 to 4. Find out their understanding of mime and what their experiences of mime are.

Task
Resource 4, slide 5. Discuss with students each item on the list that encompasses physicality of a character.

Every aspect of a character that should be seen in gesture, expression and movement:
1. What is the character? (Is the character an animal? Is the character an object?)
2. Emotion?
3. Age?
4. Impediments? (pain, etc.)
5. History of the character that could affect how they stand, sleep, etc.
6. Task (What is the character doing?)
8. Props and costume. (How could these affect the character’s physicality?)
9. Other characters (What is the relationship between characters?)
10. Gesture (What does the character want to say?)

Students are to explore the physicality of a character whose details will be given by the teacher. They start by silently walking around in the space. Students should understand that this is a mimed exercise, so no talking or noise is allowed. The teacher should shout out the instructions for the character.

- What is the character? (Cat, human, mouse …)
- Emotion? (Happy, shy, hungry …)
- Age? (A few months, very old, grown up …)
- Task? (i.e. What is the character doing?) (Washing their face, eating some cheese, relaxing …)

Students can then choose their own character out of the teacher’s selection, and exhibit the following as instructed by the teacher:

- Other characters (What is the relationship?) (Independent/dependent, friends/not friends …)
- Gesture – say ‘Hello’ without speaking.

At the end of the exercise students should be invited to explain the actions that they used to show the physicality of their characters.

**Main activity**

**Expression**

Discuss expression with students – Resource 4, slide 6. Ask students to explain how an actor might demonstrate that they are tired in a mime.

**Task 1**

Take two volunteer students assigning one as a puppet and the other as a creator. Ask the creator to mould the puppet into a character that is human and has just stepped on something disgusting.

Ask for any comments from the class. Can they think of another way to show the expression?

**Task 2**

Resource 4, slide 7, students in pairs. One is a creator and the other is a puppet. The creator moulds the shape and expression of the puppet to show one of the states:

- A small child who is lost and scared
- An angry, very old person
- A person who is thinking very deeply
- A person who just saw a creepy-crawly that they are scared of.

Students should then swap roles with the creator now becoming the puppet and vice versa.

Select students to show their work to class. Ask observing students to guess what/who the puppet is.

**Task 3**

Students should form two equal lines facing each other. On a count of three they are to create an expression that shows either:

- Happiness
- Disappointment
- Anger
- Shyness
- Love
- Hurt
- Shock
- Pleasant surprise
- Slyness
- Meanness.

Their opposite partner is to try and guess which state they are trying to convey.

**Plenary**

Ask the class for a response to the following:

- What is a mime?
- What does an actor use in a mime?
- What is a gesture?

Students should complete pp. 4 and 5 of Resource 1.
Lesson 2: Scenario

Learning objectives
By the end of the lesson students will have learnt:
- To demonstrate improvisation skills and understand skills used in mime
- How to improvise a short play from a scenario
- To understand and create a tableaux and a freeze frame
- To understand and perform a mimed scenario.

Starter activities
Recap Lesson 1.

Scenario
A scenario is a term used for a plot outline used by actors of the commedia dell’arte.
Resource 4, slide 8.
Discuss ideas for how the following scenarios could be used to create a short mimed play:
- Child has done something wrong, Adult is suspicious then cross.
- Person is miming to another person through a window.
- Two young people out camping in a tent, they become scared, then relieved.

In pairs, students should improvise a mimed play using one of the above scenarios.

Main activity
Living pictures
Resource 4, slide 9.

Task 1
Explain what is meant by tableaux and freeze frame. Students should then devise a tableau that gives the observer the most information of what their mimed play is about. Ask students to imagine that they are creating a living film poster of their play and that they will use this to advertise it.

Task 2
Students are to devise a freeze frame that highlights a key moment in their mimed play. There are a variety of ways that they could use the freeze frame, for example, an event may occur and they could turn and gesture to the audience and freeze, before continuing on with their action. They could use it to create a pause for effect, such as being frozen with fear. They could use a freeze frame to signal a change of tempo, etc.

Task 3
Students should then rehearse starting with the tableaux and including one freeze frame in their mimed plays. Students will then form their tableaux and the teacher will select which play they will see based on the ‘interesting’ tableaux. The selected group will then perform their mimed play with a freeze frame to the rest of the class.

Plenary
Students should be invited to comment constructively on the plays that are seen.

Discussion
Ask the class for a response to the following:
- What is a scenario?
- What is a tableau?
- How did you use a freeze frame?

Students should complete pp. 6 and 7 of Resource 1.

Lesson 3: Silver Screen

Learning objectives
By the end of the lesson students will have learnt:
- To explore gesture, movement and expression through the use of a Narration
- To use narration in a similar style to silent movies and devise a short play
- To know some of the great comedy artists of the silent film era
- To recognise the techniques they used to show character.
Starter activity
Recap previous lessons.

Warm-up
Students should sit in a circle. The teacher gives out the title of a story such as *The Lumpy Bumpy Road*, *The Bad Penny*, etc. The teacher starts the story by saying ‘Once’; the student to the right of the teacher says ‘upon’, and so on. The idea is that all the students contribute one word that improvises a story that relates to the title. The exercise ends when a natural conclusion is met and a student says ‘The End’.

Narration model
This time the teacher narrates a story based on a nursery rhyme. Select students who will mime the action of the nursery rhyme characters. Remind students about demonstrating the physicality and expression of their characters. Use this to model the next task to students.

Narration
In groups of character numbers, plus a narrator needed for the nursery rhymes, students are to carry out the modelled exercise. They should understand that this is a mimed exercise unless they are a narrator.

Main activity
Resource 3. Discuss how narration and music (Resource 5) is used for silent movies. See Resource 4, slide 11.

Task
Using Resource 1, p. 9, students can write down the scenario of their chosen nursery rhyme. Students should select the most important moments when they think a narration might be needed. The narrator will now only be able to narrate via placards or signs. They can use Resource 1, pp. 10 and 11 to write a short narration message.

Students should now rehearse with a silent narrator.

Plenary
Select student groups to perform their plays using a silent narration.

Invite constructive feedback from observing students:

- How did the use of narration affect the way your play was improvised?
- How did the narration placards affect the audience?
- Name a comedy artist of the silent film era.
- How did you recognise well known nursery rhyme characters?

Lesson 4: Lazzi

Learning objectives
By the end of the lesson students will have learnt:

- To follow instruction and lazzo scenarios taken from commedia dell’ arte
- Follow, create and explain a scenario
- Know and explain what lazzis are
- Know two lazzis and demonstrate them.

Starter activity

Recap previous work.

Task 1
Resource 4, slide 13. Discuss where the word lazzi comes from and its meaning.

Task 2
Model lazzo of Eating the Fly – Resource 4, slide 14. Also Resource 6. The teacher should give an idea for a scenario and setting for the lazzo. For example, arrange three students seated facing the audience. For the purpose of the demonstration the teacher will facilitate being the sound of the fly. The seated students are in a classroom working, the student seated in the middle is very hungry. This student should demonstrate feelings of hunger through mime. The other students are focused on their work. In comes the fly, and disturbs a focused student. That student reacts naturally to the annoying fly, the fly buzzes around the middle student who attempts to catch it. It then goes on to disturb the other working student who bats it away; it flies back to the middle student who promptly

Resources
- Resource 1, pp. 8, 9, 10 and 11
- Resource 2 (narration blank card)
- Resource 3 (a selection of silent film suggestions)
- Resource 4, slides 10 and 11.
- Resource 5 (silent movie music)
- Nursery rhymes.

As an extension students could develop their mimed nursery rhymes further and devise how they could use Resource 5 (incidental music).

Resource 2 is a copy of the narration blank in the student booklet.

Homework
All students should complete Resource 1, pp. 8 and 9.

Key words:
- Lazzi
- Lazzo
- Commedia dell’arte
- Scenario.

Resources
- Resource 1, pp. 12 and 13
- Resource 4, slides 12 to 17
- Resource 6 (Lazzi).

The lazzis used require students to think carefully about their movements and how they interact safely with others. Some of the lazzis need careful choreography that should be rehearsed in slow motion initially.

A recap of working safely in the drama space is always a good idea here.
catches it. The other students notice that it has been caught and continue to watch and react while the middle student tears off the fly’s wings, studies it, and devours it as if eating a chicken.

Grouping students into two or three, they should now learn the lazzo.

Task 3
Resource 4, slide 15. Also see Resource 6, Lazzo of Falling Asleep. The scenario for this one could be a student who falls asleep while standing waiting for a class, or could be between a student at home and a parent. Using two or three students, model the lazzo to the rest of the class.

Grouping students into two or three, they should now learn the lazzo.

Main activity
In the same groups, students should now devise a play that includes two of the lazioni that they have rehearsed. The challenge is for the students to construct a clear story told through mime. Students should be able to place the lazioni within a larger story that they have created.

Plenary
Select student groups to show their plays.

Ask observing students to comment constructively on the successful use of the lazioni.

Ask the class for a response from the following:
- What is a scenario?
- What are lazzi?
- What is a lazzo?
- What is the language that lazioni and lazzo are from?

Lesson 5: Comedy

Learning objectives
By the end of the lesson students will have learnt:
- How comedy can be created through timing, pace and expression
- To understand the importance of staying in character
- To be able to give examples of and explain why something is funny
- To devise an original comedy play
- To communicate a convincing character using words, movement and gesture
- To think of and apply different ideas to enhance a performance.

Starter activity
Recap the work in previous lessons.

Resource 4, slide 18. Explain that students will be looking at popular mime characters – Resource 3. Ask students to comment on the skills that Harpo and Mr Bean use to show their character and the story. What are their actions and expressions like in comparison to speaking characters?

Discussion
Ask students:
- What makes you laugh?
- Why do you find it funny?

Students should complete pp. 14 and 15 of Resource 1.

Main activity
Students will be devising a comedy mime about their experiences in the first weeks of a new school.

Ask students the following questions:
- What can happen if you don’t label your clothes?
- Who has got their clothes/shoes mixed up? What happened?
- Who was so excited that they didn’t get enough sleep before the first day? How did this affect you? Did you get into trouble or make any mistakes?
- Who had brand new equipment (pencils with fluffy tops, etc.) that they wanted to show off? Did anyone have better equipment? How did this affect you?
- Who thought that the senior students were very grown up and big? How did this affect you?

Discuss with students ideas for possible comedy scenarios set around the first weeks at school – Resource 4, slide 19.
Students can use the techniques seen in this lesson and in previous learning to devise a comedy mime about the first weeks at school. They can apply mime to a focal character or to the whole play. They could use placards for narration as in silent film, or speech and thought bubbles, etc. They could develop a lazzo to fit in with their scenario. They could use incidental music. They could have more than one scene.

They should aim for a play lasting between 3 to 5 minutes (based on a class of thirty students split into five groups).

Remind students about drama room safety rules.

Arrange students into performance groups of 3 to 6. Students should discuss their own ideas for a play set around the first weeks at school. They should then begin to improvise their ideas.

Students’ groups should observe another group’s work in progress to give constructive feedback on a play’s clarity of story, actor’s expression and movement, comedy content as well as propose ideas.

Students should continue to develop their plays with the purpose of being ready to perform in the next lesson.

**Plenary**

Ask the class for a response to the following:
- Why is it important to stay in character?
- What ideas have you applied/intend to enhance the performance of your play?
- How did feedback help you to develop your play?

**Lesson 6: Modern mime**

**Learning objectives**

By the end of the lesson students will have learnt:
- How to show character and story to an audience
- To understand communication through movement, mime and gesture
- To perform work to others, conveying story and character in a comic way
- To evaluate own work and the work of others
- To set their own targets for learning.

**Starter activity**

Resource 4, slide 20. Using the objectives explain to students that this is a performance and evaluation lesson.

Allow students time to rehearse and organise any props, etc.

**Main activity**

Allot about 5 minutes for each group.

Students will present their plays to an audience. Presenting students should not review their own plays on p. 17 of Resource 1. They can review their own work on pp. 18 and 19.

**Audience**

Students should aim to provide a written and oral analysis of the plays, using appropriate language and theatre vocabulary to suggest improvements.

Students should be respectful audience members.

Students should observe each play carefully and decide on their favourite performance by judging the quality and standard of the performance by the standards set out in the drama objectives as well as its comic impact.

Students should be asked for constructive feedback at the end of a performance.

They should be able to comment on how funny they thought the play was as well as the use of mime.

**Evaluate**

Using Resource 1, p. 17, students are to write a review of the play that impressed them the most, using appropriate terminology and giving reasons for their opinions. They should also comment on what they learned from their favourite performance.

Students should then write about their own work in Resource 1, pp. 18–19 and answer the following questions:
- What have you found the most difficult to do in this topic? Why?
- What did you do well? Explain.
- What do you need to focus on to improve/achieve your targets? (Write three targets one each for creating/making, performing and evaluating/responding.)
They should aim to:
▶ Make constructive comments about their own work, and other people’s work.
▶ Use the appropriate terminology when reviewing performances
▶ Write about their contribution to the work done in class.

**Plenary**
Choose students to give examples of written comments and performance reviews. Ask for feedback regarding what students have learnt over the whole scheme.
▶ Did they enjoy the work?
▶ Would they like anything included in the scheme that wasn’t covered this time?
▶ Would they like to see any other changes to the scheme of work?
▶ What did they learn?
▶ What was their favourite aspect of the scheme?

Students are to complete Resource 1 neatly, using the expected standard of grammar and spelling.
RESOURCES

Needed but not supplied here:
KS3 Drama Objectives
A selection of nursery rhymes
Resource 1: Student Booklet

Links to download Student Booklet PDF and Publisher file:
http://www.rhinegold.co.uk/downloads/catalogue_supporting_materials/mime7.pub

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**Lesson 1: Mime.**

*(Physicality, Expression, Gesture)*

How drama can be conveyed through silence and movement.

- **Goal:** A basic history of mime.
- **Activity:** Explain a mime and demonstrate communication of character through movement, gesture, and expression.
- **Assessment:** Know a basic history of mime.

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**Lesson 2: Scenario, Tableaux, and Freeze Frame.**

How to improvise a short play from a scenario.

- **Goal:** To create a tableaux and a freeze frame.
- **Activity:** Demonstrate improvisation skills and understand skills used in mime.

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**Lesson 3: Silver Screen.**

To know some of the great comedy artists of the silent film era.

- **Goal:** To recognise the techniques they used to show character.
- **Activity:** Use narration in a similar style to silent movies and devise a short play.

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**Lesson 4: Scenario, Lazzi, Commedia Dell’Arte.**

To follow instruction and Lazzi scenarios taken from Commedia Dell’Arte.

- **Goal:** Follow, create, and explain a scenario.
- **Activity:** Know and explain what Lazzi are.
- **Assessment:** Know two Lazzi and demonstrate them.

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**Lesson 5: Lazzi and Mr. Bean.**

To explore the style of Mr. Bean.

- **Goal:** Be able to find examples of Lazzi scenarios in modern comedy.

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**Lesson 6: Comedy.**

How comedy can be created through timing, pace, and expression.

- **Goal:** Understand the importance of staying in character, be able to give examples of and explain why something is funny.
- **Activity:** Devise an original comedy play.

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**Lesson 7: Performance.**

How to show character and story to an audience.

- **Goal:** Perform work to others, conveying story and character in a comic way.

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**What is Mime?**

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**Why is physicality important in mimed drama?**

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**What should you consider when applying physicality to a character?**

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**What is a gesture?**

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**What is a scenario?**

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**Which scenario did you improvise?**

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**What is a tableaux?**

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Describe how you used tableaux.

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- 
- 

**Describe the scenario for your play.**

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- 
- 

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What language does the word Lazzi come from?

What is a Lazzo?

What style of theatre uses Lazzi scenario?

Describe the scenario for your play.

List 10 things that make you laugh.

1.______________________________
2.______________________________
3.______________________________
4.______________________________
5.______________________________
6.______________________________
7.______________________________
8.______________________________

Explain why they make you laugh.

1.______________________________
2.______________________________
3.______________________________
4.______________________________
5.______________________________
6.______________________________
7.______________________________
8.______________________________

Write about a class performance that you found funny and state why you found it funny.

Describe the scenario for your play.

Self Assessment
Look at your personal targets and the level descriptions. Are you on track to achieving your drama targets? Yes? No?
What do you need to focus on in improving/reaching your targets?

What did you do well?

Creating
Performing
Evaluating
Effort
Level
What could you do to improve?

What did you do well?
Resource 2: Narration blank card

Link to download of these images (Zip folder):
http://www.rhinegold.co.uk/downloads/catalogue_supporting_materials/Narration blank card_frames.zip
Resource 3: Films

Silent films:
Laurel and Hardy:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4t0966xX9hA
Buster Keaton:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kt7Emllld3Q
Charlie Chaplin:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=txSJDmt4u6Q

Examples of characters who mime in sound film:
Harpo Marx:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x9f5aVd-A2A
Mr Bean:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oBjhCoj5kqU
Resource 4: PowerPoint presentation

Link to download PowerPoint presentation:
http://www.rhinegold.co.uk/downloads/catalogue_supporting_materials/Mime.pptx

L1: What is Mime?

What is Mime?

A theatrical technique of showing action, character, or emotion without words, using only gesture, expression, and movement.

Mime.

- The Greek pantomimus which means 'imitating all' was a form of solo dancing often accompanied by music which included both comedy and tragedy.
- Kathakali a form of domestic dance of India, based on Hindu literature and characterized by moody, stylized costume and make-up and frequent use of mime. Kathakali actors train for years learning the prescribed movement, gesture and expression used in the theatre.
- Commedia dell’arte (Comedy of Art) is a form of theatre characterized by sketchy masked character types which began in Italy in the 16th century. It used improvised performances based on sketches or scenarios which were very often mimed.
- Dumb Show is an old term for pantomime, actions presented by actors onstage without spoken dialogue. (Usually used in plays within plays of the Elizabethan era).
- Jean-Gaspard Balthazar Deburau (developed the Pantomime character Pierrot) A clown that did not speak.
- Marcel Marceau (created Bip the clown from the Pierrot) He created his own school, Compagnie de Mime Marcel Marceau, in 1948, for the development of the mime arts.
- Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, Laurel and Hardy (Silent film Comedy)
- Physical Theatre a form of theatre which emphasizes the use of physical movement for expression.
- Rowan Atkinson (created Mr Bean) Influenced by physical performers such as Jacques Tati and comic actors from silent films.

Physicality

Every aspect of a character that should be seen in gesture, expression and movement:

1. What is the character?
2. Emotion
3. Age
4. Impediments (pain etc.)
5. History of the character that could affect how they stand, sleep etc.
6. Task (What is the character doing?)
7. Environment (Is it healthy? Happy? Etc.)
8. Props and costume. (How could these affect the character’s physicality?)
9. Other characters (What is the relationship?)
10. Gesture (Speaking without speech?) Movement of part of the body, especially a hand or the head, to express an idea, emotion, intention or meaning.

Expression

The action of making known one’s thoughts or feelings:

- Eyes
- Eyebrows
- Nose
- Mouth
- Body

Use expression to show characteristics and feeling.

L2: Scenario

A plot outline used by actors of the commedia dell’arte

Objective: To understand and perform a mimed scenario.

- a. Child has done something wrong. Adult is suspicious then cross.
- b. Person is miming to another person through a window.
- c. Two young people out camping in a tent, they become scared, then relieved.
Living Pictures

Tableaux - a group of models or motionless figures representing a scene from a story or from history.
Freeze frame - a still image of a key moment/event.

Devise a tableaux that gives the observer the most information of what your mimed play is about.
Devise a freeze frame that demonstrates a key moment in your mimed play.

Scenario
a. Child has done something wrong. Adult is suspicious then cross.
b. Person is miming to another person through a window.
c. Two young people out camping in a tent, they become scared, then relieved.

L3: Silver screen

Objectives:
To explore gesture, movement and expression through the use of a narration.
To use narration in a similar style to silent movies and devise a short play.
To know some of the great comedy artists of the silent film era.
To recognize the techniques they used to show character.

Use physicality and expression to show action, characteristics and emotion.

Narration

Lazzi

Physical or verbal jokes that are learned and memorized by commedia actors.

Commedia dell’arte = comedy of art
Italy in the 16th century

Lazio = Jokes

Lazzo of Eating the Fly.
After being harassed for some time by a bothersome fly, a student catches the fly. The student then tears off the fly’s wings, studies it, and devours it as if eating a chicken.

Lazzo of Falling Asleep
One student (A) calls another student (B) who does not answer. Finally, the student who is called, replies but with long intervals between each word as if he has fallen asleep. Student (A) fetches student (B) who immediately falls asleep on the floor. Student (A) helps student (B) to stand who again falls asleep into the arms of student (A).

Lazzo of the statue
Student (A) is brought in as a statue or automation. He plays tricks on the other characters when their backs are turned, always returning to the statue position when they face him.
(Italian) **Lazzi = Jokes**  
Physical or verbal jokes that are learned and memorized by commedia actors.

(Italian) **Lazzo 4= Joke 4**  
**Lazzo of the knock**

Student (A) just arising from a sleep, bumps his head into student (B) and then steps on Student (B’s) toes. Student (B) kicks Student (A). Student (A) responds by accidentally striking Student (B) in the face.

**Objective:** To use previous learning to devise a comedy mime about your first weeks at school.

**Ideas:**  
Confusion with clothes  
Competition between friends over equipment or packed lunches  
The Queue at dinner  
Getting up early  
Listen carefully in class.

**Remember Drama safety rules.**

**L5: Comedy**

- Actions  
- Expressions  
- Vocal sound effects  
- Few words

**L6: Performance**

**Objectives:**  
- Perform an original devised comedy using mime.  
- Demonstrate communication through movement, mime and gesture.  
- Perform work to others, showing story and character in a comic way.  
- Evaluate your own work and the work of others.  
- To set your own targets for future learning.
Resource 6: Lazzi

**Lazzo of Eating the Fly**
After being harassed for some time by a bothersome fly, a student catches the fly. The student then tears off the fly's wings, studies it, and devours it as if eating a chicken.

**Lazzo of Falling Asleep**
One student (A) calls another student (B) who does not answer. Finally, the student who is called, replies but with long intervals between each word as if he has fallen asleep. Student (A) fetches student (B) who immediately falls asleep on the floor. Student (A) helps student (B) to stand who again falls asleep into the arms of student (A).

**Lazzo of the Knock**
Student (A) just arising from a sleep, bumps his head into student (B) and then steps on Student (B's) toes. Student (B) kicks Student (A). Student (A) responds by accidentally striking Student (B) in the face.

**Lazzi of the Statue**
Student (A) is brought in as a statue or automaton. He plays tricks on the other characters when their backs are turned, always returning to the statue position when they face him.