

Getting Connected: Drama workshops help adult ESL students learn English and improve their confidence

For the past two years the Sydney Theatre Company has partnered with MTC Australia to provide our adult Skills for Education and Employment students with the Connected program.

MTC Australia delivers Skills for Education and Employment (SEE), a government-funded program that helps job seekers improve their English language, computer and job searching skills.

Since 2016, Sydney Theatre Company (STC) Teaching Artists have collaborated with our SEE English Trainers to deliver the Connected: Adult Language Learning through Drama (CALLD) program.

“Connected is a program that uses drama approaches to improve literacy, particularly with people who are learning English as an additional language. A lot of our participants are migrants, refugees and asylum seekers,” says STC Teaching Artist Zoe Hogan.

“Drama is a really engaging way of working with students regardless of their English language levels and that’s because we’re using our body language, facial expressions and other ways of making meaning.”

Connected has seen some great results, with students improving their literacy and gaining confidence and new skills. Western Sydney University Lecturer Dr Rachael Jacobs is studying the impact of the program.

“Out of Connected we see so many different positive results,” says Dr Jacobs. “The students start using more complex adjectives, they start using longer sentences. The other benefit is that students start to see their own creative potential. They start to imagine their future possibilities.”

Recently MTC SEE English Trainer Kathryn Salman and her class took part in the program and were part of a 2-day video shoot detailing the experience.

View the video here: <https://youtu.be/INhiYIP8-OM>

“My students are a warm, generous and lively group,” says Kathryn. “They refer to MTC and this class as their second family. They try to help, support and encourage each other through their experiences in Australia, and greatly appreciate the opportunity to learn and understand more.”

“I greatly enjoyed the Connected program. I involved the students and myself in this venture 100%, by expanding on what we learned in the workshop during our regular classes, and because of that the program was very successful. Now the students are asking to do more drama as we learned so much!

“Would I do it again: 1000 times yes! I cannot recommend it highly enough, it gave me so much joy, insights and a challenge to try something new.”

Connected is made possible by a group of donors to Sydney Theatre Company’s education program.

MORE INFORMATION

sydneytheatre.com.au/education/our-community/adult-drama-and-literacy

www.sydneytheatre.com.au/magazine/posts/2018/november/news-connecting-refugees-through-creativity

mtcaustralia.com.au/education-training/see/

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