

Identifying Objectives

Characters come to life when they have things that they wish to achieve and reasons why they wish to achieve them. There are three terms commonly associated with what characters want. They are as follows:

1. *Motivation* – “what impels a character to behave in a particular way” (Drama 30 Curriculum, Drama Glossary). A motivation asks “why”.
2. *Intention* – thinking about what you want to get out of a situation (Cohen). An intention asks “what for”. Characters with intentions use tactics and are faced with obstacles
3. *Objective* – a concrete outcome a character is working to achieve. May be conscious or unconscious. It asks essentially “What do I want to accomplish?”. (Method)

All three of these terms are used to create a reason for the character’s behavior, whether it is past events or a vision of the future. Students will have varied success with each method, depending on their views of the world and behavior patterns. While all of these work well in developing a character, Intention/Tactics/Obstacles is the most easily explained. Students do not necessarily need to be able to articulate different ways to develop a character by name, but they do need to try a variety of techniques, and identify one that works for them. Character Building by Colborne and Ramsden has an excellent discussion of this concept and some good activities to develop it.