

Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages Based on Drama

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Abstract: This article is going to focus on relationship between productive and receptive skills and highlight advantages of scenario-based language teaching. There are effective ways to develop speaking skills using scenarios based on life events on various topics. Some top reasons of teaching why to teach English through drama. While teaching English it helps to have something that students associates with another, which make the target language easy to learn and some special language rules or words not difficult to remember.

Keywords: drama, learner, role-plays, skits, confidence, motivation, life-lessons, EFL teacher.

Teaching English through Drama to the average EFL teacher putting on a play with children in a foreign language may seem ambitious, especially when pupils are struggling with the basics. However, a lot of pupils leave primary school with no English at all other than “My name is Aziz” in spite of having worked through several textbooks and sat in class for years. It may be time to try a different approach such as working with plays and skits. Drama can help you achieve better results, have more fun, and motivate pupils. Anyone who has played with young children knows that they love to role-play with their toys and make up imaginary worlds. Since this is something children love to do naturally it seems sensible to try it into the process in English class. Instead of sitting passively looking at the book, students participate and learn actively. The results are much better in terms of language retention, confidence and motivation. In addition, pupils learn to work together as a team and many become more confident not only using spoken English, but with speaking as a whole. Using fun skits is one way to create this active learning environment, which is also more rewarding for the teacher. In addition, a teacher using plays and skits gives far more to the pupils than vocabulary and grammar. Drama in the classroom can teach life skills such as cooperating with others, speaking publicly, being creative and imaginative, and becoming more confident.¹ This type of English teaching enriches the child far more than ensuring he or she can write out “I have two sisters and a cat”. When pupils are motivated and enjoying lessons they will try harder and be more likely to succeed, not to mention that they will like their teacher better too!

Some reasons to teach English with plays²:

1. Language in role-plays and skits is authentic. Using plays enables children to use English in real conversations, expressing feelings and listening to the ideas of others. Acting out skits brings meaning and understanding to English. By the time a pupil has repeatedly rehearsed a skit he or she knows and remembers it.
2. Preparing a play promotes fluency because children learn and repeat their lines frequently, gaining in skill and confidence progressively.

¹ C. Greenfader, L. Brouillette, Boosting Language Skills of English Learners Through Dramatization and Movement. *The Reading Teacher*, 67(3), 2013, pp.171- 180. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/TRTR.1192>

² C. Greenfader, L. Brouillette, Boosting Language Skills of English Learners Through Dramatization and Movement. *The Reading Teacher*, 67(3), 2013, pp.171- 180. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/TRTR.1192>

3. As confidence grows children can become clear and confident speakers, a great asset for life. Even shy students are coaxed out of their shell since they can hide behind a role or props. The power of the persona is such that children who might otherwise be hesitant about speaking in public are often able to do so unselfconsciously when playing a part.
4. Importantly, using plays is also beneficial for all those pupils who prefer a mix of learning styles, especially those who are tactile learners. The varied and active nature of preparing a play allows visual, auditory and tactile learners to each find their own way of integrating the language.
5. Children enjoy learning in this way and are motivated by it.

How plays motivate students and motivation is king. Let's develop how using plays and skits can motivate pupils:

1. Children can easily lose motivation in learning a subject if they find it difficult. Failure and fear of failure are surefire ways for pupils to become withdrawn and dejected as far as learning English goes. Bad behavior can be a mask to hide behind to disguise the fact the child finds the subject overwhelming. With plays and skits all children can meet with some success, which is encouraging for everyone.
2. Plays are ideal for managing a mixed ability class since roles may be adapted accordingly. Star students take on more, and this is vital because if you ignore your best students they may become demotivated and even start messing around in class due to boredom. Slower students have fewer lines or lines in unison with others. Children who suffer from real learning difficulties may be included using nonverbal cues such as body movements and facial expression. In this way, their confidence can be nurtured without bringing the whole class down to their level. In the meantime all students will be benefiting from being present and hearing the English spoken over and over again.
3. Children pick up your mood. If you find trudging through the grammar boring, so will they. Using plays will stimulate everyone.
4. Plays allow all children to belong to the group. In a drama lesson all children are actively involved, each role, however small, is essential for the successful performance of the play. A sense of belonging can be achieved here that is difficult to attain in the more traditional classroom setting.

How does drama help ESL students learn?

Teaching language through drama gives students an opportunity to relax the mind while learning and retain knowledge better³. Memorization of lines activates and trains the brain while connecting language with gestures. Acting helps students remember words and sentences. The use of the body on stage helps teachers get a total physical response from your students, which is one of many effective ESL teaching methods. An ESL teacher uses props to perform a skit. What is the role of drama in teaching ESL? A dialogue, skit, or play gives students context. Learning, memorizing, and practicing a drama allows students to interact with the content on a deeper level, engaging all four language skills: reading, speaking, listening, and writing (if they also make their own props for the stage, or if they take notes on their lines, for example). Using drama to teach English builds team spirit, communication skills, and students' confidence in their own English abilities. During a drama practice, students can make mistakes, experiment with language, and even learn to

³ Spolin, V. (1999). *Improvisation for the Theater: a handbook of teaching and directing techniques*. Northwestern University Press.

improvise if they forget a word or a line. This flexibility and adaptability builds fluency and vocabulary knowledge, increasing students' confidence even further.

As an example teacher may introduce students with the story about family, where the family values are highly illustrated. Teacher divides roles to students according to their willing and potentials. Students learn the words of the personage and try to be like the role they are playing. At these time teacher should tell students, what mimics, what gestures to do and what characteristic traits to own. Students learn and perform he play, they at the same time work on their speaking skills ranging from pronunciation to fluency. At the same time students may feel different feelings like happiness, confidence and self-satisfaction. Teaching the language based on role-plays have plethora of benefits relating to both language learning and life lessons gaining.

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