

Drama in the Second Language Classroom

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OBJECTIVES:

- To present strategies for incorporating drama into the L2 classroom.
- To distinguish between Drama and Theatre (process vs. product).
- To explore the benefits of drama in the classroom.
- To workshop ways to teach a second language through drama.
- To empower teachers to defend the incorporation of drama into their curriculum.

Drama is a transformative, human-making activity with the potential to affect our personalities, adjust our codes of behavior and mold our autonomy as individuals.

TRENDS IN CONTEMPORARY PEDAGOGICAL THEORY

10 Macrostrategies for Teachers

[Kumaravadivelu 1994]

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|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1) Maximize learning opportunities | 5) Foster language awareness | 8) Promote learner autonomy |
| 2) Facilitate negotiated interaction | 6) Contextualize linguistic input | 9) Raise cultural consciousness |
| 3) Minimize perceptual mismatches | 7) Integrate language skills | 10) Ensure social relevance |
| 4) Activate intuitive heuristics | | |

Communicative Language Teaching

Communicative language teaching is "a meaning-based, learner-centered approach to L2 teaching where fluency is given priority over accuracy and the emphasis is on the comprehension and production of messages, *not* the teaching or correction of language form." [Spada 2007]

What is communication?

What is DRAMA?

VS.

What is THEATRE?

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As early as the 1960's in England, drama has been present in the language classroom as a function of Democracy, that is, it served to give every student a voice.

[Barnes 1968]

DRAMATIC ACTIVITIES	DESCRIPTION
Simulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dramatic, communicative activities that ask students to solve a problem as themselves. (Livingstone 1983, Via 1987) • Synonymous with task-based language teaching
Role-playing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An extension of simulation where students are asked to take on different personas other than themselves with motivations and attitudes matching those new personas. (Livingstone 1983)
Hot-seating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewing a character or role-player who remains 'in role.' Group and teacher can ask questions. This may be done by freezing the improvised action and removing the characters, or by sitting them formally on the 'hot-seat' to face questioners. • Encourages insights into character and roles, highlighting motivations and personality, and reflective awareness or human behavior.
Teacher-in-role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher stimulates and directs the drama from within by adopting a suitable role. This can excite interest, control the action, incite involvement, provoke tension, challenge superficial thinking, create choices and ambiguity, develop the narrative and create possibilities for the group to interact in role. • Removes some degree of power and status from the teacher but replaces it with negotiated role relationships.
Improvisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children work in small groups to plan, prepare and present improvisations as a means of expressing understanding of a situation, idea or experience. • Requires excellent negotiating skills on the part of the participants. • Good for sequencing ideas, selecting content, exploring characterization, devising dialogue and events, gaining performance skills and developing confidence in expressive performance.
Role-reversal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At a key moment in the drama, selected by the teacher, children take on roles representing a different status, viewpoint or occupation. • This is an effective convention for examining social interaction, opposing viewpoints, relationships and motives.
Thought-tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual students, in role, speak their inner thoughts. The teacher freezes the drama and taps a chosen character on the shoulder to indicate that they should speak their thoughts or feelings within the drama. • Thought-tracking slows the action down by allowing it to pause, enables the children to reflect on events and establishes what the characters are thinking or feeling at a specific moment in the drama - which may or may not reflect what they have been saying out loud.
Other Dramatic Activities: Mime Living Pictures Reader's theatre Physicalizing Pronunciation Alternative Ending	Other Product-centered Dramatic Activities: Scriptwriting Making a movie Puppet show Speeches/Monologues/Oral Interpretation Skits/Full Production (all in L2 or multilingual)

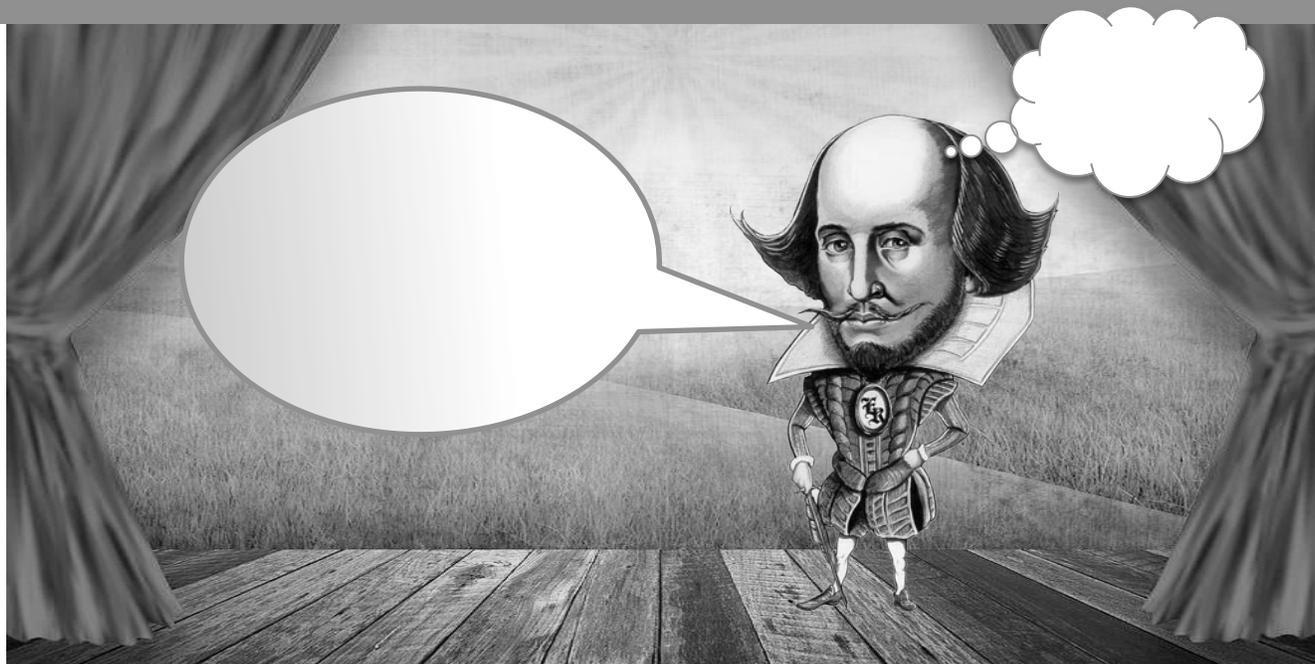
Benefits of Drama in the L2 Classroom [Haley & Duff 1978, 2011]

1. Integrates language skills in a natural way: Careful listening is key and spontaneous verbal expression is integral. Reading and writing can also be involved as a part of the input and output.
2. Integrates verbal and non-verbal aspects of communication. [physical and intellectual]
3. Integrates cognitive and affective domains. [feeling and thinking]
4. Contextualizes language through a focus on meaning.
5. Holistic, presents opportunities for catering to learner differences.
6. Fosters self-awareness (and awareness of others), self-esteem and confidence.
7. Motivation is fostered and sustained through variety and drama's unpredictable nature.
8. Transfer of responsibility for learning from teacher to learners.
9. Encourages an open and exploratory environment where creativity and imagination can develop.
10. Positive effect on classroom dynamics and atmosphere.
11. Low resource. For the most part, all you need is a 'roomful of human beings.'

In Conclusion . . .

1. Drama gives students a virtual experience in functioning in extended, realistic discourse in the target language where learners are able to learn not only appropriate language use, but real communicative processes as well.
2. Drama provides learners with more opportunities to interact directly with the target language and to acquire it by using it rather than being taught.

**“TELL ME AND I FORGET, TEACH ME AND I
MAY REMEMBER, INVOLVE ME AND I LEARN.”**



Everyone Loves a Good Metaphor

Language teachers sometimes behave like the owners of large estates, putting up high walls round their territory and signs saying 'No Trespassing.' Drama is like the naughty child who climbs the high walls and ignores the 'No Trespassing' sign. It does not allow us to define our territory so exclusively—it forces us to take as our starting point *life* not language. [It] may involve music, history, painting, mathematics, skiing, photography, cooking—anything. It does not respect subject barriers.

The language teacher will be wise to take advantage of this to enliven his work. Once his students have discovered that there is another world, much closer and more real than that of the [the textbook], the problem of 'how to keep their interest' will gradually disappear. And, strangest of all, this other world does not need to be conjured up with expensive equipment—all that is needed is a roomful of human beings.

[Maley & Duff 1980]

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OTHER RESOURCES:

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ONLINE RESOURCES:

- http://iteslj.org/links/TESL/Lessons/Role_Plays/
- <http://www.eslflow.com/roleplaysdramatheatre/games.html>
- <http://www.tes.co.uk/drama-secondary-teaching-resources/>
- http://busyteacher.org/classroom_activities-speaking/roleplays/

NOTES OR COMMENTS:

This presentation and handout can be found online at
<http://www.matthewbarbee.com/english-through-drama.html>

It's a Heat Wave

Eight Short Argument Role-plays

Level: pre-intermediate - intermediate

Aim: a speaking activity with emphasis on oral fluency; students role play a series of arguments that all take place on a hot summer's day.

Language point: expressions to use for getting angry.

Note: Try using these role plays on a really hot day. It will allow your students to unwind and let off steam! Tell the teacher next door before you do this activity!

Warmer

Write the words *Heat Wave* on the board. What do people understand by Heat Wave? A heat wave is a continuous period of hot weather. Are heat waves common where the students come from? At what temperature would students consider they are in a heat wave? (note: there may be some variation in the answers here; a heat wave for an English person may be radically different than for a Mexican, Spanish or Turkish person!) What usually happens during a heat wave. Elicit examples of things that happen. Doctors say that during heat waves people become more irritable and likely to get into arguments.

Stage one:

Set up the situation. It is the middle of a heat wave in a big city. Each pair of students will be given a role card with a situation and some language on it. They have five minutes to prepare their role play. The role play must last at least one minute and they must incorporate the expressions on their role cards (for this part they have to decide who says the expression!). They mustn't tell anyone else what their expressions are. Circulate and help students with the meanings of their expressions. There are eight different role play cards. If you have less than sixteen students, choose the ones you think will be best in the situations. If you have more than sixteen students, repeat some of the situations.

Stage Two

Pairs perform their mini role play in front of the class. So that the class pays attention, give them the following task: they must try to "spot" the expressions that were on the card and record them in their notebooks. After each role play, see if the class can find the expression!

Stage Three

After all the role plays are finished, do a quick review of the new language that came out. You might want to pick up on an interesting use of language you heard, or students' errors. Do any of the situations seem familiar to the students? Has anything like this happened to them before?

Variations

For more or less advanced learners, vary the preparation time and presentation time. For lower students give them more language to get them started, for example the first two lines of dialogue (this requires a little more preparation on your part). Very creative classes could make up their own situations for role play.

If you have an odd number of students, make a group of three with the family role play situation.

Taboo variation: Of course, in a native speaker argument, the expressions might be made a little more "colourful" with intensifiers (see below). To make the activity more realistic you might suggest some of these. If you do teach your students "bad" words, discuss the issue first! They should know when these are acceptable and when not. Some teachers (and students) might feel that swearing is never acceptable and certainly not in class, while others not. Only use these if you as a teacher are comfortable doing this and that there is no objection in your school or by your students!

Expressions for getting angry (stronger variations)

You've got a **damn** nerve!

It's not my fault goddammit!

Your attitude really pisses me off!

I don't believe this! It's **bloody** ridiculous!

I'm tired of getting all the shit jobs!

I'M NOT **BLOODY** SHOUTING!

It's a Heat Wave

Role Cards

It's A Heat wave!

A: You are waiting in line to buy an ice cream. You turn around to talk to someone and when you turn back, **B** has stepped in front of you.

B: A friend was holding your place for you before A arrived.

Expression:

"You've got a nerve!"

It's A Heat wave!

A & B: You are a couple driving to see some friends outside of town. When the car breaks down. You are alone on a deserted road. **A** was supposed to take the car to a garage for servicing last week but forgot.

Expression:

"It's not my fault!"

It's A Heat wave!

A: You are an English teacher on a summer course. **B** is always late for class and never listens to you.

B: Your parents are making you take a stupid English course this summer. It is boring. You want to be with your friends.

Expression: **"This is the last time. I'm warning you!"**

It's A Heat wave!

A: You are taking your child to a big theme park, but it is time to go. You don't want to spend another 30 minutes waiting to go on a ride.

B: You really want to go on the giant roller-coaster. It's the best ride in the park and your parents want to leave.

Expression:

"That's it! I've had enough!"

It's A Heat wave!

A: You bought a train ticket two minutes ago, but you realise now that you gave the wrong date. You want to change your ticket.

B: A bought a non-refundable train ticket. They cannot make changes or get their money back.

Expression: **"I don't believe it. This is ridiculous!"**

It's A Heat wave!

A: You are going out for an evening walk with your girlfriend. When she arrives, you think she is wearing inappropriate clothes.

B: Your boyfriend is very jealous. He doesn't like it when other boys look at you. He is also paranoid.

Expression: **"Your attitude really bugs me!"**

It's A Heat wave!

A & B: You both work in a nice cool shop, but one of you has to go outside and clean the front windows (a 30 minute job!) You can't agree who has to go outside.

Expression:

"I'm tired of getting all the bad jobs!"

It's A Heat wave!

A: You came to the clinic because you have a stomach-ache. A nurse told you that someone would see you in 10 minutes. You have been waiting for 45 minutes.

B: You are the nurse.

Expression:

"I'M NOT SHOUTING!"