

Drama Techniques in Language Learning

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We will not know
unless we begin.

Howard Zinn

Dramatic activities are those activities which give the student an opportunity to use his or her own personality in creating the material on which *part* of the language class is to be based.

Four important points for implementation of drama

- Drama is used to practice language, or give learners the opportunity to use language from their developing inter-language to make it more available for future production.
- The language comes from the learners; therefore their own internal level of language and interests dictates what they will choose to practice.
- The language learners produce will be contextualized by the situation and dependant on the whole text.
- There will be some spontaneity in the activity and the students will be acting in real time.

The man who removes
a mountain begins by
carrying away small
stones.

Chinese proverb

Use of Drama activities in teaching

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Some examples of drama activities:

Quotes dramatization: When studying a theme students are given a list of the quotes on the theme to read and discuss. Then they are suggested to dramatize one of the quotes, using miming and may be a few words so that the rest of the students could guess the quote (dramatization can be done in pairs or individually). Students may be asked to give explanation of the way they have shown the quote.

Making up a story. Students are divided into mini-groups 3-5, then they choose a controversial sentence to give their point of view and have to think of the story and write it down to illustrate their solution using some definite vocabulary which is to be practiced at the lesson. The mini groups dramatize the story and the other mini-group is asked to restore the story being shown by miming. The stories are compared.

Dramatic dialogues Give out the dialogue(s) and ask students to read it (one) together. It is unlikely that students will vary their intonation at this stage. Under each dialogue there are a list of possible contexts or emotions. Ask learners to read out the dialogue again, but putting in the context or emotion. They must still stick to the script of the dialogue and not add or subtract any words. There are different ways you can do this in class.

1. Ask students to do it in pairs. Ask a pair to come up and perform the scene for the rest of the class.
2. After the initial practice of the dialogue, ask a pair to come up and perform it in front of the class. Give them the context (which the rest of the group doesn't hear). The rest of the class has to guess the context.
3. Same as (2) above but give the context to everyone except ONE of the learners performing the dialogue (he or she could leave the room while you do this). When he or she comes back, the pair performs the dialogue and the learner has to guess what was happening.

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List Of The Quotes and proverbs: www.quote garden.com

Who chatters to you will chatter of you.

The cat in gloves catches no mice."

A man must eat a peck of salt with his friend before he knows him. – Miguel de Cervantes

Do not think of all your anxieties, you will only make yourself ill. – Shih King.

Every man is the architect of his own fortune. – Sallust.

Men will sooner surrender their rights than their customs. - Moritz Guedmann

Forget love - I'd rather fall in chocolate! ~Sandra J. Dykes

Love is the magician that pulls man out of his own hat. ~Ben Hecht

A beautiful lady is an accident of nature. A beautiful old lady is a work of art.--Louis Nizer

A woman's guess is much more accurate than a man's certainty.-Rudyard Kipling

Controversial sentences:

Computer games are good for developing children.

People shouldn't restrict themselves in food.

Watching TV is better than reading books.

Books and friends should be few but good.

Women are wiser than men.

A hero is a man who does what he can - Romain Rollan.

A great obstacle to happiness is to expect too much happiness.

Beauty is only matter of taste.

A good husband makes a good wife.

Boys and girls should have the same education.

Most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be. - A. Lincoln.

Being unemployed is an important enough reason to push somebody onto the path of crime

Dramatic Dialogues

WHAT'S YOUR NAME

A What's your name?

B Jon Wood.

A Where are you from?

B New Zealand.

A What do you do?

B I'm a medical student.

Possible contexts: You are in a disco, one is trying to pick the other one up; You are at airport customs and have something illegal in your bag; You are a prisoner of war.

SAY SOMETHING

A Well, are you going to say something?

B What do you want me to say?

A I don't know, anything.

B I have nothing to say.

A Nothing?

B That's right.

Possible contexts/emotions: You are in love, afraid, angry; you are two criminals trapped in prison; you are in a courtroom; you are talking to your boss on the phone.

SHE'S HERE.

A She's here.

B Already?

A Yes. What do you want me to do?

B Tell her to come in.

Possible contexts: You are afraid/excited/furious; you are at work and "she" is the president of the company; you are the President of the United States waiting to meet the Queen of England.