

Lesson 8

Title: Drama techniques for practising speaking skills

Time frame: 1 hour

Number of participants: Ideally between 10 to 20 participants

Learning outcomes:

1. To understand what drama techniques are and their benefits in language learning acquisition
2. To identify the main types of drama activities and practise three of them
3. To learn some tips to help students become relaxed during drama activities

Lesson structure:

Introduction: what are drama techniques
<p style="text-align: center;">SLIDE 1</p> <div><p>The slide features the EASE logo in large red letters, with a subtitle 'An Emotionally-intelligent Approach to teaching Speaking in a forEign Language' below it. To the right is a blue circle containing the text 'Continuing Professional Development Sessions'. At the top left is the European Union flag and the text 'Co-funded by the European Union'. At the bottom, a disclaimer states: 'The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.'</p></div> <p style="text-align: center;">SLIDE 2</p>



Drama Techniques for Practising Speaking Skills

Theatre-based
activities for
improving oral
communication

Welcome the participants and introduce yourselves. Display slides 1 & 3 and introduce the title of today's lesson. Ask participants what comes to their mind when they hear the expression "drama activities" and whether they have used them in their classes before. Write on a whiteboard the main ideas (brainstorming).

Show the table of contents on slide 3 and explain the main concepts that will be reviewed today.

SLIDE 3



1

Introduction
Drama techniques in
foreign language
teaching

Teaching Content
Benefits of using
drama techniques to
practise speaking
skills

2

3

Sample Activities
Theatre games,
improvisation, and
roleplay

Conclusion/Reflection
Reflection and further
learning

4

SLIDE 4

Introduction



"I can't believe you're here"



In groups of 3, take turns saying the above sentence using different emotions. Some suggestions are below, but get as creative as you want, as long as you **only** say the words above. Use body language to express the emotion you have chosen as well. The others have to guess which emotion you are expressing.

Anger - Sadness - Surprise - Judgment - Happiness - Fatigue

In groups of 3 (slide 4), ask participants to take turns saying the sentence "I can't believe you are here", using different emotions. Some suggestions of emotions are the following: Anger - Sadness - Surprise - Judgment - Happiness - Fatigue. However, ask participants to get as creative as they want, as long as they **only** say those words. They can also use body language to express the emotion they have chosen. The others have to guess which emotion they are expressing.

Ask the following questions (slide 5), to see how they felt when doing this activity.

SLIDE 5

Introduction

1. How did that activity make you feel?
2. Which speaking skills do you need to use in order to do the activity?
3. Have you used improvisation, roleplay, etc. in your class to improve speaking skills?



Then, explain what drama techniques are (slide 6). Show the evolution of drama techniques throughout the last centuries (slide 7). Explain that drama techniques were used in education with the communicative approach during the 1970s.

SLIDE 6

Drama Techniques in Foreign Language Teaching

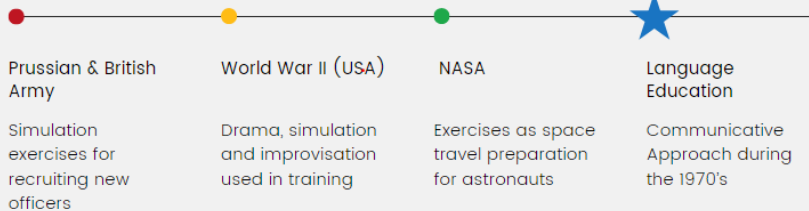


- Drama techniques are exercises that can be used throughout the language acquisition process. It combines elements of traditional drama with a range of activities such as role plays, simulations, games, songs, etc.
- "Drama does not refer only to the product, the performance, but also to the entire process of language learning" (Phillips, 2003)



SLIDE 7

A Journey through Drama Techniques



SLIDE 8

Explain some facts about the communicative approach (CLT) in language learning on slides 9 & 10.

Communicative Approach



- Drama techniques are based on the Communicative Approach (CLT).
- The goal is not linguistic accuracy, but rather the students' ability to communicate in the target language fluently. (Larsen-Freeman, 1990)
- The teacher does not direct the activities, but rather acts as a facilitator of the learning process
- The student is the true protagonist and the lesson is learner-centred.
- Grammar mistakes are tolerated, since communication and fluency are given a main role. The teacher can correct students' errors afterwards.

Content: benefits of using drama techniques

Brainstorm by asking the whole class why they think drama techniques are so effective and important in the foreign language classroom. Explain that for a foreign language teacher, the main benefit of employing drama techniques in the classroom is to foster speaking skills (slides 9 & 10).

SLIDE 9

Content

Benefits of using drama techniques

SLIDE 10

Benefits of Using Drama Techniques



Why are drama techniques so effective and important within the overarching theme of EI in the foreign language classroom? The use of drama techniques to teach speaking skills...



**Develops
imagination and
storytelling**

Whiteson, 1996



**Enables students
to explore social
experiences that
they are likely to
encounter in real
life**



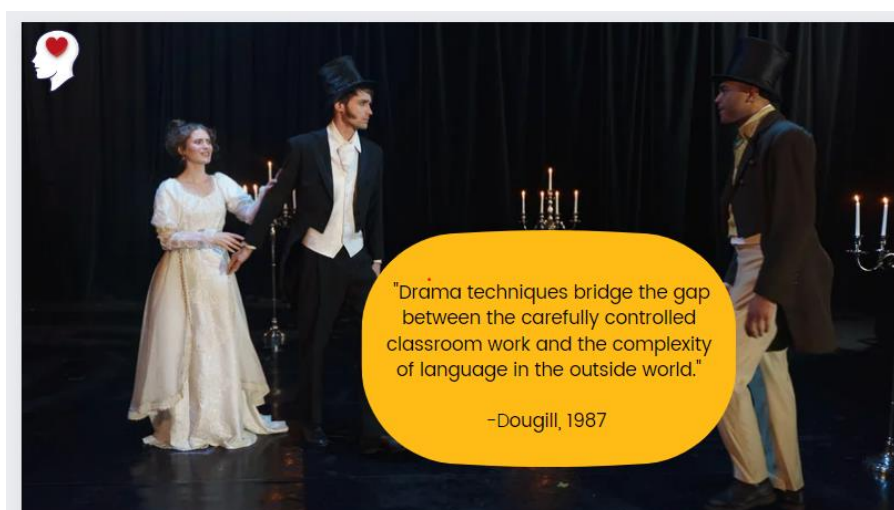
**Allows learners to
connect emotions
to words**

Discuss the most important benefits that drama techniques can bring to the class (slide 11) and themselves and show other additional benefits by Dougill (slide 13).


SLIDE 11



SLIDE 12



SLIDE 13



Other Benefits of Drama Techniques by Dougill (1987)

- Develop confidence and can be motivating
- Help cater to mixed-ability classes and large numbers of students
- Provide a framework for communicating
- Allow for unpredictability in language use
- Provide a bridge between classroom and the real world.
- Provide physical involvement

Read the quote on slide 12 out loud, and ask participants to stand up and go to the right side of the class if they agree with the statement or to the left side of the class if they disagree.

Sample activities: types of activities

Explain that in the next slides, they will be introduced to some types of drama activities that could be used in the class to improve the speaking skills of the learners. The drama exercises that will be presented are mime (slides 15 & 16), roleplay (slides 17 & 18) and improvisation (slide 19).

Explain that firstly, they will learn the definition and some characteristics of this drama activity and then they will be able to practise one example.

ACTIVITY 1 (MIME)

Online adaptation (Zoom/Meet/Teams):

1. Divide the class into two teams and ask for a volunteer (leader) from each of the teams.
2. These players need to close their eyes or leave the room for 1 or 2 minutes.
3. Write a word that you have previously studied on the digital whiteboard.
4. Ask students in the teams to use actions to describe the word, without speaking or spelling the word.
5. The first player (leader) to guess the word scores 5 points.
6. That player then changes places with someone in their team and the same procedure starts.
7. The team with the most points at the end of the game wins.

ACTIVITY 2 (ROLEPLAY)

Online adaptation (Zoom/Meet/Teams):

1. Divide students into pairs and split them into small breakout rooms.
2. Tell them they have to think of a “bad holiday” experience.

3. Provide these questions to help students come up with different ideas:
 - a. *Where did you go?*
 - b. *What was the weather like?*
 - c. *What did you do?*
 - d. *What happened?*
 - e. *How did you solve the problem?*
4. Encourage them to use their imagination and creativity as much as possible. Ask them to take some notes and then, represent the play in front of the class.

ACTIVITY 3 (IMPROVISATION)

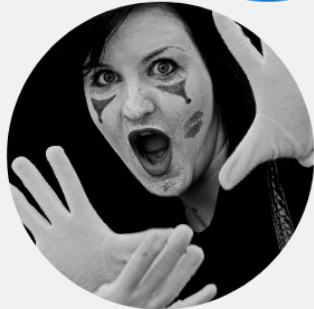
Online adaptation (Zoom/Meet/Teams):

1. Ask for three volunteers
2. The class ask questions or gives problems for which they need advice.
3. Each of the three students provides a different kind of advice: good, bad, and really bad (ugly) advice.
4. Switch the roles around so that different everyone has the chance to provide different kinds of advice.
5. If the 'bad advice' is really bad, then the 'ugly advice' should be even worse

SLIDE 15

Mime

- Non-verbal representation of an idea or story through gesture, bodily movement and expression
- Useful, powerful and undemanding activity which underlines the importance of non-verbal communication, especially through facial expressions and gestures
- Memory is extremely reinforced by visual associations, which help retain language
- Students' abilities of observation and improvisation are trained



SLIDE 16

Mime Sample Activity: Guess Us!



1. Divide the class in two teams.
2. One player from each team comes to the front of the class and faces their team with their back to the board.
3. Write a word that you have previously studied on the board.
4. Ask students in the teams to use actions to describe the word, without speaking or spelling the word.
5. The first player to guess the word scores 5 points.
6. That player then changes places with someone in their team.
7. The team with the most points at the end of the game wins.



SLIDE 17

Role Play



- A classroom activity which gives the students the opportunity to practise the language, the aspects of role behaviour, and the actual roles they may need outside the classroom (Livingstone, 1985).
- Students improve their initiative, self-confidence, group work and communication in general

SLIDE 18



Role Play Sample Activity

- Divide students into pairs.
 - Tell them they have to think of a "bad holiday" experience.
- Provide these questions to help students come up with different ideas:
1. Where did you go?
 2. What was the weather like?
 3. What did you do?
 4. What happened?
 5. How did you solve the problem?
- Ask them to take some notes and then act out the situation in front of the class. The other students identify which emotions were being displayed and which verbal and nonverbal cues lead them to that decision.

SLIDE 19

- Ask for three volunteers to line up
- The class ask questions or gives problems for which they need advice.
- Each of the three students provides a different kind of advice: good, bad, and really bad (ugly) advice.
- Switch the roles around so that different everyone has the chance to provide different kinds of advice.
- If the 'bad advice' is really bad, then the 'ugly advice' should be even worse


Improvisation Sample Activity: The Good, the Bad, & the Ugly



Improv can be used as an activity to improve speaking skills and practise expressing different emotions. The language employed can be analysed and discussed afterwards. Improv can also improve students' confidence.

Conclusion: students' resistance

SLIDE 20



Conclusion

Addressing students' resistance

Ask participants whether they believe all their students would be willing to take part in these drama activities (slide 20). Explain that in some cases, students could be reluctant when performing drama activities in the classroom due to shyness, insecurity or fear to speak in public. Tell them not to worry since they will learn some tips to encourage students to feel more relaxed in these contexts (slide 21).

SLIDE 21



Overcoming Emotional Barriers to Participation

1

Perform the activity in advance as an example in order to clarify any doubt about the activity.

2

Ask for volunteers when starting an exercise, instead of forcing a student to do it

3

Don't expect a high acting ability or great creativity skills

4

Making positive comments is fundamental, since they enhance students' participation and involvement

End the lesson by asking the following reflection questions on slide 22:

- *What value do you see in using drama techniques to improve speaking skills (if any)?*
- *How can you help your students overcome their nervousness?*

SLIDE 22



Reflection

1. What value do you see in using drama techniques to improve speaking skills (if any)?
2. How can you help your students overcome their nervousness?



Bibliography and resources for further learning

Ashton-Hay, S. (2005). Drama: Engaging all Learning Styles. Proceedings 9th International INGED (Turkish English Educational Association) Conference. Economics and Technical University in Ankara, Turkey <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/12261/1/12261a.pdf>

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Ulas, A. H. (2008). Effects of Creative, Educational Drama Activities on Developing Oral Skills in Primary School Children. American Journal of Applied Sciences, 5 (7), 876-880. <http://thescipub.com/PDF/ajassp.2008.876.880.pdf>

Whiteson, V. (1996). Drama. In New Ways of Using Drama and Literature in Language Teaching (pp. 90-127). Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

Notes for the facilitator:

For the online version of the sample activities, please see the explanation given after each slide.

Printable materials:

Both the online and face-to-face versions include the use of a digital projector where this PPT presentation can be shown. In the online class, an online platform such as Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams should be used.