



A32: Vocabulary drama activities in order to develop literacy and language interaction

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Almost everyone loves to be involved in acting/ drama activities, from kids in a beginning class to adults who've been working all day.

Using drama activities in your language classroom will help your students to connect the verbal communication involved in vocabulary, grammar and structure with the non-verbal communication of gestures, facial expressions and movement.

By introducing a drama activity that gets your students on their feet, you help them to remove focus from exclusively speaking the language "correctly." They begin to understand that combining what they can say with other natural, non-verbal cues will help them to overcome shyness that leads to a type of quiet interference.

The followings drama activities will help you use the vocabulary of arts (glossary) that was prepared by the Greek partners. The activities are not mine but I selected the most appropriate from the knowledge I have on drama education through my studies in England (Master Degree) and extra educational courses/trainings in Cyprus and abroad (KA1 Training drama courses). I hope that it will be as helpful as possible. Please implement in your classrooms and upload videos and photos on practice.

Learning an arts' category vocabulary

Once you said/taught the words of a specific category: for example vocabulary about dance, then try to play any kind of games to learn them.

You always need to start drama activities using some warm up. So first on a circle you play this game:

1. Catch and Clap: Warm up activity

Players in a circle. Toss a bean bag or easy-to-catch ball back and forth around the circle. Let players know that it is the thrower's responsibility to allow the catcher to catch it! Once a rhythm is established, introduce a "clap" every time the ball is in the air. All other players must clap in unison while the ball is in the air. Play until there is a nice rhythm and flow! For more advanced drama groups, introduce another ball into play.

After the warm up, in each catch they have to say a word of this particular category of vocabulary. The next child must say a word of this category, or the same word in a different language, otherwise is out of game.

After they learn the category, in every ball throwing they can ask from the next child to say the word ex: "dance" in Cypriot, or in Estonian, so gradually its getting more difficult.

2. Energy Ball (this is again a warm up activity that you can develop)

This is a classic theatre game! In a large circle, have all players hold their hands up, palms facing each other. Next, ask them

to imagine that they are holding a ball of energy. Invite them to feel the energy pulsating and radiating light. Have them make it larger, and then smaller. After a few moments of practice, have everyone drop their hands and choose one person to create an energy ball and toss it to another player across the circle. Players can make their energy balls move quickly, or very slowly. They can be large or tiny. Players receiving the energy ball can transform the ball before tossing it to another player.

This traditional drama activity can easily be transformed into language learning. Instead of giving an energy ball, the child will try to act energetically like the word he thinks and then sends the energy to a child of his/her choice in order to say the word. Before the game, it must be given a small category of words, so that they can guess easy, since some words can be really difficult. After the end of this activity, a small drama can be played, like chain reaction acting from one child to the other.

s.o.s: Have the right materials on hand from the beginning

Each of these activities will need a bit of preparation on your part. Some of the items you'll need you can provide yourself, while for a few activities your students will be involved in the producing, finding or bringing in of some items.

Some basic items may include:

- a deck of playing cards to help with pairing participants
- a bag of hand-held props to use in the activity
- extra chalk or strips of scrap paper

- prepared flashcards
- an egg timer with a bell

3. Group Stop

Have everyone quietly mill about the room. Tell group members that at any moment, a player may stop. As soon as that happens, the other group members should also stop. Basically, one person 'freezing' should cause all of the others to freeze. Anyone in the group may start moving again, causing the entire group to move. This game reminds actors that what they do onstage is dependent on what other actors do. A play is a series of actions/reactions, not merely memorizing one's part and saying lines on cue.

You can use this activity to freeze in word sounds. For example the teacher says cancao, which means song in portuguese and children must freeze in a movement that presents it.

4. People to people

Have players scattered around the room milling about. When the leader calls out "People to People!" players must immediately find one other person. Next, the leader calls out two body parts such as "nose to knee." The players must connect one person's nose to the other person's knee. Lastly, the leader calls out two more body parts such as "hand to shoulder." While keeping their first position (nose to knee) the players must connect one person's hand to the other person's shoulder. Ring a bell and have the players resume milling about the space until the next round starts.

*This activity must be play like this in the first place. Then instead of body parts that must be connected the leader/teacher will give two words in different languages and children must present them in couples.

5. Alphabet Conversation

Have a conversation where each sentence begins with the next letter of the alphabet. This may seem difficult at first, but improves with practice. If you get stuck, you can also use sounds to start a sentence, for example 'Mmmm' or 'tut-tut'. Here is an example:

A: Anyone seen my cat?

B: Black one, with funny eyes?

A: Can't say I remember.

B: Don't tell me you've forgotten what it looks like?

A: Every cat looks the same to me.

B: Fortunately, I found one yesterday

A: Gee, that's great!

You could also try beginning somewhere in the middle of the alphabet. Then when you reach 'Z', return to 'A' until you arrive back where you started

Try setting the scene or location before you start

It's great for car journeys too!

*This activity it's great because the children can start in their language a sentence according the alphabet order, but

must include a word from the category of the arts' glossary its being taught.

They learn easily this way the meaning of the words.

6. Catch my name:

A fun way of learning names. The group stands in a circle and begins by throwing a beanbag or bouncing a medium-sized ball, such as a children's football, across the circle from one person to another. Make sure people are ready to throw and ready to catch. Eye contact is important.

Now, introduce yourself as you throw or bounce the ball across the circle - 'Hi, I'm Robert'. Once everybody has had a go at that, continue the game but this time say the name of the person that you are throwing to - 'Jessica to Kelvin'. The group should ensure that everybody receives the ball. One way of doing this is for everybody to hold one hand up until they have caught the ball, or each person folds their arms when they have thrown it.

This activity in a classroom where everyone knows each other can be change as follow. The student that throws a ball instead of introducing himself says: a word from drama: "Theatro" in greek and then asks to change category: drama to music. So the next person must find a word in music in different language- it might be good to set the language from the beginning- he says piano and then before throwing asks the next category music to art.

7. One word at a time:

In a circle, the story is started, with each person in turn adding one word. It usually starts with 'Once - upon - a - time'. The idea is to keep your thoughts free flowing, so that you don't try to guess what is coming or force the story in a particular direction. It is not always easy to maintain a logical flow for the story, although it is always amusing. If the group is too large, break into smaller groups.

Another variation is to throw or roll a ball around the circle in any order.

Add your word as you pass the ball to the next person.

This ensures that people are more attentive; although you should make sure everyone is included.

Try playing the game in pairs, where both participants act the story out as it is told. In this case, tell the story in the present tense and as 'we'. For example, 'We - are - climbing - a - mountain. - Look - a - giant -spider - coming - towards - us. Quick - run!' You can soon create an adventure story in this way. You can also use the one word at a time technique to create characters made up of two or more people - great fun for interview scenes!

8. Sculptor and statue

In pairs, one person (A) is the sculptor and the other (B) is the block of clay. 'B' begins by standing in a neutral position; the sculptor slowly moves 'B's body into a new position according to the theme that is being explored. Ideally this is done without talking so that all communication is through body-language.

Facial expressions can be shown by the sculptor for the statue to copy.

Many themes can be explored using this popular technique and some examples are listed below. Once the statues are made, an 'exhibition' can be held so that the sculptors walk around and look at each other's creations. After this they can swop over. Sculpting can also be done by small groups, with one person being moulded by the others until they reach consensus.

Remember that it is difficult to hold a physical position for a long period, so give a time-limit.

You may like to give the sculptors paper and pen so that they can write a title or caption for their masterpiece and put it in front of the statue.

9. Ten Second Objects

This is a very popular drama game and a useful technique which can be developed easily towards improvisation or physical theatre. It's also highly accessible and great fun! Divide everyone into small groups (4-6). Call out the name of an object and all the groups have to make the shape of that object out of their own bodies, joining together in different ways while you count down slowly from ten to zero. Usually every group will find a different way of forming the object. Examples could be: a car, a fried breakfast, a clock, a washing machine, a fire.

About our theme it will be arts in different language. Each group that presents it the best get 5 points or maybe some sweets.

10. Yes, lets!

Whole group game. One person starts with a suggested action - "Let's play the piano", for example. Everyone else shouts, "Yes, let's!" and the whole group carries out the action with as much enthusiasm as possible. After a while someone else can suggest a new action - "Let's be spies!" - "Yes, let's!" The aim is for the whole group to fully commit to the activity. Try not to rush too quickly from one activity to the next - explore each one for a while. A good warm-up for impro work.

Thank you for reading! Enjoy them with your students. You can get the idea and create even your own. These are just some ideas to start with.

THE END!