

I have Something To Say! Using Drama in an EAL/D Classroom

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Drama for EAL/D

- Student-centred, peer learning
- Social awareness & understanding
- Cooperation, empathy, leadership, teamwork
- Focus, turn-taking, active listening
- Embodied & experiential, kinaesthetic
- Critical thinking, creativity
- Opportunities for engaged reflection
- Fun!
- Language in context, authentic situations
- Confidence in target language
- Practice of taught grammar, acquisition through modelling
- Pronunciation, prosodic features, clarity of expression
- Flexible, dynamic, improvisation develops fluency, spontaneous language
- Interactive & visual

Artist & Teacher roles

CLAIRE

- funded by La Boite partnership with MDA Ltd (YConnect legacy project)
- 1 x 60min lesson/week
- drama activities & games
- prompts to move process drama forward
- brought young emerging actors from La Boite
- directed students in dramatic principles
- planned unit with Jacqi

JACQI

- 3 lessons/week
- EAL/D macro skills & language development
- built upon drama sessions
- developed texts/scripts with students
- practiced role plays, activities with students
- learned drama activities from Claire
- planned unit with Claire

Portfolio Unit - Overview

- Students' own voices
- Issues in adolescence
- Agency over what they talk/write about; student as expert
- Producing & developing language, rather than learning subject-specific content & vocabulary
- Developing confidence in oral language, writing
- Solidify BICS – building a strong foundation before CALP
- Weekly topics:**
 - My favourite things
 - Who am I?
 - It makes me mad!
 - My best day
 - The perfect place
 - Friendship
 - Heroes
 - Hopes & Dreams
 - I would like to learn...
 - My message for the world

Portfolio Unit – Drama activity

DRAMA ACTIVITY

- Get into groups of 2-5 & make a shape
- Triangle, square
 - Letters
 - Objects – elephant, knife & fork, rollercoaster, bowl of noodles
 - Places – beach, house, car, shops, erupting volcano
 - Feelings – sadness, love, surprise, anger
 - Concepts – friendship, home, belonging, hero

LANGUAGE ACTIVITY

- Write about the object/concept/emotion enacted in drama activity
- Collect & redistribute
- Read out someone else's writing
- Collate for class
- AIMS:**
 - inspiration, fluency, connection, confidence
 - building vocabulary
 - extended expression e.g. *Feel happy -> I feel like I want to smile all day, and jumping*

Portfolio Unit – Drama activity

DRAMA ACTIVITY - POSTCARDS

- Teacher gives a theme/topic e.g. a park
- One student enters and "makes an offer" by making a shape e.g. "I am a rock"
 - Then other students enter one by one e.g. "I am a tree"
 - Bring it to life for 10 seconds
 - Tap & talk or Soundscape
 - Take a photo!

LANGUAGE ACTIVITY

- Photo of the postcard (or just the experience) can be used as stimulus
- vocabulary
 - description
 - story starters
 - scene from novel
 - grammar prompt e.g. questioning, present tense
 - reflection/emotions

Creating a student-led drama

1. Create 2 characters
2. Develop relationship & history between the two
3. Introduce conflict
4. Create 2 more characters – how do these fit into the story? What relationships do all the characters have?
5. Introduce scenario (e.g. THE DANCE)
6. What conflict arises between all the characters?
7. How do they deal with it? How do they solve it?
8. Brainstorming scripts from improvisations
9. Editing scripts for final presentation

Group drama activity

POSTCARD

- Scene: playground fight
- Participants move in one by one to add to the picture
- Bring it to life via tap & talk

Facilitator's role – structure, questioning

- What is happening here?
- Who are you?
- How do you feel?
- What happens next?
- What do you want to say to this person?
- What are you going to do next?
- What are you thinking?

Pair drama activity

6 LINE DIALOGUES

- Stimulus: picture from the storyboard
- Improvise and practice
- Write 3 lines of dialogue each
- Volunteers to present to group



Drama strategies & terminology

Drama strategies – also known as drama techniques or drama conventions – are the everyday tools of the drama teacher. They help to develop enquiry skills, to encourage negotiation, understanding and creativity. They can enhance performance skills such as character development and storytelling and be used across the curriculum to actively involve students in their own learning.

Adapted from http://artspop.org.au/drama-drama_glossary/ and <http://dramaresource.com/drama-strategies/> (Accessed 10th August 2017)

Enrolling (Enrolment) – This is the process of building belief and identification with the role of the character being played. Occasionally it simply consists of giving the players a point of view and a task: “You are journalists about to interview local citizens. What questions might you ask to get a really good story for your program?” If the role demands deep empathy and passion, this must be painstakingly built, perhaps with preliminary exercises, in-role writing, or preparatory role-play in pairs. Whatever the depth, the teacher must always take care of, and allow enough time for, this component of the drama.

Hot-seat – This is where players have a need to question or interrogate a character, to find out information, to discover why the character behaved in a certain way, or to offer the character advice. The method may be used for developing a role, or analysing a performance. Even done without preparation, it is an excellent way of fleshing out a character. Characters may be hot-seated individually, in pairs or small groups. The technique is additionally useful for developing questioning skills with the rest of the group.

Mantle of the Expert – This technique is central to process drama and involves enrolling the students in roles that demand real expertise (such as scientists, explorers, or in this drama, top investigative reporters), and modelling the rudiments of that expertise. Mantle of the Expert (MoE) is based on the premise that treating children as responsible experts increases their engagement and confidence. They can perceive a real purpose for learning and discovering together in an interactive and proactive way – providing them with skills and knowledge they can apply to their everyday lives. MoE encourages creativity, improves teamwork, communication skills, critical thought and decision-making.

Role-on-the-wall – This is a technique for developing and backgrounding a character by pinning a life-size paper representation of the character on the wall or floor and inviting the participants to write words or longer comments on the image (or stuck on with post-its) to help to define the character.

Soundscape – This is a series of sound effects that creates a picture in sound of a particular location or dramatic context. This can incorporate percussion instruments, music, or vocalised noises, even words. Soundscapes may be used as a background, and the effects may be symbolic and atmospheric rather than literal.

Teacher-in-role – You can and should take part in the drama yourself, as this will help the students to take the drama seriously; teacher-in-role gives you the opportunity to help control what happens without stopping the drama; and it gives you an unparalleled opportunity to suspend the power and status relationships in the classroom

Thought-tracking (or Tapping in, Tap and Talk) – This is a dramatic convention where characters playing roles can be frozen/unfrozen and asked by the teacher or other students (who tap the character on the shoulder to activate the image) to express what is going through their mind at a particular moment in the present or in the future. It is a quick fire strategy enabling children to verbally express their understanding of characters and situations without the need for rehearsal. Students gain confidence to speak in front of others, preparing the ground for them to move into extended improvisation. It is surprisingly easy for pupils to identify with a role and express their thoughts after holding a still image for a few moments. The teacher can efficiently gather feedback from all the students.

For more information, see <http://artspop.org.au> and <http://dramaresource.com> for a number of good resources about teaching drama.

Other drama stimuli

- An object (e.g. a gift-wrapped box)
- Simple costumes e.g. a hat, a scarf
- Blank scripts (could be many characters, many situations, depending on how it is presented)

Use existing texts as inspiration:

- piece of music
- picture book e.g. Red Tree/Sarah's Heavy Heart
- Scene from a movie/novel – different POV

