

INTRODUCING DRAMA IN ESL Workshop

Drama in this context does not mean a classical play or a theatre performance. While it does not exclude the elements of a play or a performance it also includes a number of other aspects. Wessels says that "drama in education uses the same tools employed by actors in the theatre. In particular, it uses improvisation and mime. But while in the theatre everything is contrived for the benefit of the audience, in classroom drama everything is contrived for the benefit of the learners" (1987: 8).

Using improvisation and mime will provide the learners with a practice of a foreign language similar to the use in the real life. Speaking communication in the real life situations is characterised by limited time for preparation. When learners experience sufficient practice in the class they will feel more comfortable using the language in the real environment, their response will be spontaneous, they will have to adapt and react quickly and act the roles they were assigned. Mime and the body language will become an important tool stimulating and enriching the learning experience.

Drama, when brought into the learning process, has the means to enhance to a large extent the whole experience acquiring a foreign language. It helps learners in many areas. To name a few, it is the development of the awareness of the use of a language in different environment and situations, building self-confidence, creativity, spontaneity, improvisation and involving emotions of the participants. It encourages the natural use of a foreign language according to the particular situation.

Wessels claims that "drama is doing. Drama is being." and also that "students learn through direct experience" (1987: 7). Drama inhibits an active involvement of learners. Thus, the learners' experience using a language in the classroom becomes similar to the real-life experience. The use of drama contributes to building a solid base that learners need to have in order to become competent and confident users of a foreign language. The learners' understanding is enhanced, the knowledge deepened and skills necessary for successful reproduction of a language acquired.

2.2. Drama in the context of language teaching

Scrivener (1994: 69) gives the following list of a number of drama activities that are commonly found in English language teaching:

- 1. Role play** – Role plays enable students to step outside themselves, to accept and change into a different character.
- 2. Simulation** - In the initial stages of their learning, students become acquainted with various roles starting from the simpler ones.
- 3. Drama games** - Wessels points out that 'drama games' should "involve action, exercise the imagination, involve both 'learning' and 'acquisition' and permit the expression of emotion."
- 4. Guided improvisation** – This kind of practice requires the teacher to guide students through the initial stage of an activity.
- 5. Acting play scripts** –Script becomes a starting point that provides great space for each individual to utilize his or her talents and bring personal aspects into the learning experience.

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BIOGRAFIA

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