

**MINISTRY OF HIGHER AND SPECIALISED
SECONDARY EDUCATION OF THE REPUBLIC
OF UZBEKISTAN**

**FERGHANA STATE UNIVERSITY
PHILOLOGY FACULTY
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**This is submitted for
BACHELOR'S DIPLOMA
DEGREE**

**Theme: “Using drama and poetry for language
acquisition”**

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Group 450

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Bachelor's diploma work was passed a preliminary by chair.

_____3_____ submission number “_4_” November 2011 year

Ferghana-2012

The theme: Using drama and poetry for language acquisition

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Introduction

It is known that after the declaration independence of Republic of Uzbekistan, the president, Islam Abduganiyevich Karimov paid more attention to education and educational system of the republic.

He made many modern reforms about education, for instance: “The law of the republic of Uzbekistan on education». In this law, all rights of educators and kinds of education are written accurately.”It’s no secret that every state , every nation is strong not only by means of its natural resources, military power and industrial potential , but firstly by its culture an spirituality ”¹.That’s why, great demand is mostly on teachers and educators.

At present great importance is attached to the teaching of foreign languages. No doubt, it happens not without purpose. Today, the importance of our people/s perfect knowledge of foreign languages can scarcely be exaggerated as our country aspires to win a decent place in the world community, because our people see their future as a life in mutual accord and cooperation with their foreign partners.”We should prepare in our country in the shortest time the methods of intensive foreign language learning based on our national peculiarities.”²

Not only, foreign languages but also all spheres of subjects and education are taught at every primary, and secondary schools with a great effort and modern methods. Because, “our civic responsibility to accomplish everything that we can do and that is needed, so that our children and future generations would get from us a rich strong and powerful country and this sacred land, and they would treat us with same respect and gratitude that we perceive to our great ancestors ”³ .

Drama as aesethic learning metod

My Diploma work theme is called “Using drama and poetry for language acquisition language”

¹ Karimov.I. A.”Harmoniously developed generation is the basis of progress of Uzbekistan” Tashkent 1998y p5

² Karimov.I. A.”Harmoniously developed generation is the basis of progress of Uzbekistan” Tashkent 1998y p 9

³ Karimov.I. A “Independent Uzbekistan” Tashkent 2003y p164

According to late John Haycraft, English teaching theatre “...makes the students aware that English is not just words, structures, and idioms, but it is a lively dramatic and versatile means of communication. It emphasizes too, that learning and teaching can and should be pleasurable” (Case and Wilson2003). Haycraft’s observation about the usefulness of English teaching theatre applies equally well to the use of drama activities in general. Drama offers excellent opportunity for students to develop fluency in English.

Drama is concerned with both product (the performance) and the process of language learning. Using drama in the learner classroom gives learners who are shy when speaking a foreign language a character to “hide behind” .Dramatizing as Phillips¹ (2000) suggests , perhaps a be her word than drama. Dramatizing means the students become actively involved in a text. This personalizing makes the language more meaningful and memorable than drilling or mechanical repetition.

The method of acting out habit forming patterned learning with space for innovation creativity. How the mechanical repetition drill is to be manipulated so as to arouse the students’ interest and creativity will be the focuses of the discussion.

Language acquisition is the best accomplished in contexts where the students convey their thoughts, messages and ideas in meaningful communication. Among the four language skills, reading is emphasized in English classes, and mechanical drills, her form instead of through verbal practice (Tang1977 and Sprenger1984)This results in serious barriers to the students’ abilities the purpose in using drama

Drama is a learning medium gives the learner the opportunity to explore ways of thinking not other wise available to the man to experience meaningful learning, even as it motivates them by giving theme need to speak (kukla1987), Stern (1983)²hypothesizes that drama in learning in language classes heightens self-esteem, motivation, and spontaneity and increases the capacity for empathy, as well as

¹ Phillips S. 2000 Young Learners Oxford University press

²² Stern I.N 1983 Issues and options in language teaching. Oxford university press

lowering sensitivity to rejection. Simply talking about the language or explaining the context can not provide learning impact that results from the physical involvement that drama requires.

Drama work also enables the students to enjoy learning by becoming involved. In a large class of between 30-35, learners have few opportunities to actively participate; therefore, the methodologists have recommended small-group work. In preparing for a drama activity each individual participates in the group work and pair work. "Students are individually involved in lessons more often and at a more personal level" (Long and Porter 1985)¹. Peers have stronger interactions that are more directly related to their language experience and performance, and this provides a more spontaneous learning environment. On the other hand, with the drama technique large classes have a distinct advantage; the large audience inspires students to high performance levels.

Drama as a learning method has developed in much the same way in England and in Norway. For Norwegian teachers England has been the country to look for inspiration and renewal. English drama educators have been to Norway to give courses and seminars, a fact that makes us feel part of the English tradition.

Peter Slade (1954)² and Brian Way (1967)³ marked with a break strong school theatre tradition. Their ideas of drama as a means of developing a child's personality influenced drama practice for years. They believed that acting in traditional school performances would destroy the spontaneous and creative elements in children. Their drama exercises focused on developing an awareness of the senses, movement, imagination, and feelings. Many of these activities function today as language exercises, providing a good learning climate in a relaxed atmosphere. The task calls for negotiation and expressive language exchanged in real communicative situations. Many books on drama in language teaching and

¹ Long, M. H. and Porter P.A. 1985. Groupwork, Interlanguage talk and second language acquisition. TESOL 19,2,207-28.

² Slade P. 1954. Child drama. London: Univearsity of London Press.

³ Way,B. 1967. Development through drama. London: Longman

learning have been used in the classroom. See, for instance, Holden(1981) and Maley and Duff(1978)¹.

There came a reaction to the practice created by Slade, Way, and others. The “New castle school” led by pioneers Gavin Bolton and Johnson and O’Neil established clearly defined learning aims for their drama work. Theatre was the art form that gave structure to improvisations carried out by children and teacher in a joint effort to create meaning within an aesthetic form. “Teacher in role” made it possible for the teacher to structure the drama work from within, not giving instructions, but creating suspense, giving challenges and feedback in role..”New castle school” drama teachers were inspired in their basic pedagogical thinking by the works of Bruner(1962) and Vygotsky (1978), as well as being influenced by the aesthetic of theatre and arts.

Today, within the drama in the classroom practice, there may be a shift back to an emphasis on acting and theatre, which is a trend not quite in line with the tradition of Heathcote and Bolton, and a clear break with Slade and Way. This renewed and focused on performance in the classroom drama may stem from a wish from inside and to a certain extent claim from outside, to assess drama in schools. A public performance and acting skills are easier to assess the personal, social, intellectual, and emotional development and learning. A formal training of skills, not always based on a child’s natural way of expressing him or herself, can be the negative result of the “back to the theatre” trend.

Still, there are positive aspects combined with this more conscious work with form. Some of the same type of influence shapes impact on language learning. The theoretical aspects of both oral and written communication seem to be coming to the fore. A shift of interest from an approach based on a personal language development to more formal instructions may well be the future development in foreign language learning. The rhetoric of the language, the well- formed and well-delivered speech may be a goal at advanced levels.

¹ Holden, S. 1981. Drama in language teaching. London: Longman.

Schaffner (1984)¹ discuss the characteristics of the language developed through drama methods .There appear to be different types of language connected with the two types of drama mentioned in the paper: presentational drama(the performance aspect) and experimental drama (the living through kind of drama). The language o presentational drama has the following Characteristics: the focus is on repeating and rehearsing, and is the real communication is between teacher, classmates outside the drama ;utterances tend to be brief and interactive, and the emphasis is on character and voice. In experimental drama the focus is on the participants making a meaning for themselves from within the drama .They adopt “the mind” of another person and try to find out what reasons and motives lie behind the characters and events in the drama.

To sum up this research, it seems that experimental drama, particularly, provides opportunities for using language for a wider variety of purposes. The richness of expressive language, where thoughts and feelings are inseparable in the intellectual development, takes the learner into areas of abstract thinking and conceptual language.

The creative methodology described in the next section is based influences from these drama trends; partly on drama for personal development (Way1967), partly on theatre as a learning medium ,but mainly on drama as an aesthetic learning method for new insight.(Bolton1979,1984,Heathcote)

2.1 Using drama in teaching English language

a) Method

As it was mentioned above, the drama method is a teaching technique intended to overcome one of the student’s language barriers –speaking. The students are grouped and assigned roles according to the selected play, and they are required to present the performance of a story play in a restricted context in 20 minutes.

b) Play selection

¹ Schaffner M.G. 1984. Drama language and learning .National Association for Drama in Education Papers NS.

The criteria for selecting the play are these: it should have story, it shouldn't have any sophisticated literary devices, and it must be interesting to the students

The sources can be :six plays for acting and seven plays from American literature, simplifying adaption for great short stories and scenes for young actors excepts of scenes from many famous plays .the first two portray British and American life, with a number of humorous episodes .the third provides roles that young adults can easily understand and therefore practice.

The students prefer plays that evoke basic human interest .In this they readily perceive the appropriate use of language in various situations. In the performance work, the students' physical involvement gives vivid reality to the story.

Via games requires plays with everyday English (Via 1979).Although in plays may not be everyday English and the action not daily behavior, the students accept it because it is a pretending on stage. If the artificial parts of the language are pointed put by the instructor in the initial play reading, the students are able to translate ideas about the various situations into dramatic statements that reflect their understanding . Catching an authentic sense of the foreign language, they enter the world of the language.

During rehearsals, they have great fun getting involved in some artificial words and exaggerated actions. In fact, it is unusualness of the situation that increases their interest and involvement. An audience doesn't expect the actor's speech and behavior on stage to be like that of his daily life. Drama reflects inner life by avoiding clichés.

c)Procedure

Stage one the students are assigned four or five plays or stories to read at home. After they have finished reading them, they are asked their favourite one and the majority decides on the play for production. When the poetry has been chosen, the students are divided into groups of 8 or 9 people, according to the number of the characters in the play, and in the groups they decide which role each one will take. Sometimes one person will need to act out two roles or two persons

one role, so as to make the amount of preparation relatively equal. They are given time to read the entries play a second time outside of class.

Stage two

When the students return to class after finishing the second reading, questions are asked to check their understanding of the script. Vocabulary and usage are explained if necessary. The teacher's explanation should not last longer than ten minutes, for the students will raise new questions in the follow up activity, and it is more efficient to do the explanation then , when the students are asking specific questions.

If the students ask a question, the teacher does not have to give them an answer immediately. Turn the question back to the student and give him a second to think about it. A student might ask "How do they perform that?" The instructor just tells him to imagine what it should be like. This guessing activity is fun and meaningful, and the message and thought are conveyed in meaningful communication.

Stage three During this phase the teacher gets to know who is playing which role and guide the students in reading the script, providing the appropriate intonation for the situation and pronunciation of some difficult words. take the example of addressing a person by their first name with a rising intonation pattern: Are you staying ,Sara? Even after you have the learners as a group repeat the rising intonation, they wills till say their lines without using the appropriate intonation pattern .However, when a group is going to perform the play , they have an immediate and highly motivating reason for getting the intonation correct: performance before an audience.

In the beginning stages of reading the script, the student are not asked to do memorization and recitation. In pair work, using Michael West's "read and look up" method, they are to read their lines and they look up at their partners they speak their part, even though they may forget some of it. The instructor demonstrates the method. Students are encouraged to do nonstop speaking and ignore the mistakes they make. If students produce incorrect pronunciation, the

teacher may participate. in their drills for the purpose of encouragement in speaking and relaxation (Via 1976).the teacher may also demonstrate movements on stage with the actor's faces toward the audience. All the other parts of the production depend on the students' imagination and creativity.

Stage four. In this phase, the teacher acts as an on looker for the students rehearsals. The students may arrange for extra rehearsal meetings in between class sessions. They are encouraged to speak inter language during the rehearsals. They should speak English to convey their messages first and then switch to native language for communication; it is difficult for learners to carry on t5heir discussions in English all the time. When ever they ask a question in native language , the instructor responds in the target language or says," Are you speaking English?" in a joking way that helps to promote an air of ease.

Some of them will still respond nonnative language. The instructor then can say,"I beg your pardon?" The students often respond with smiles or a funny facial expression as the instructor says this. Always responding with the target language leads the learners to the action appropriate internal system of the new language.

Stage five telling the students" no guidance, no actors" helps them to carefully observe the presentations of the other groups. Since each group is doing the same play, the performances become somewhat competitive. The student should not asked to grade the other groups, as grading can cause anxiety . they should only be allowed to know the criteria by which they will be evaluated by the teacher.

c) the role of teacher

With the following specific items in mind the learners will work harder on their own production and pay more attention to other's presentations for comparison. The evaluating items (Hayman 1977) are :

- 1) Memorization of lines
- a) Accuracy of pronunciation
- b) Fluency
- c) Overall smoothness

- d) Continuity
- e) Naturalness
- 2) Sound effects
- 3) Movements
- 4) Characterization
- 5) Costume and prompts
- 6) Interpretation

It seems as if the teacher is an only on looker while the students are rehearsing , but by giving the students time to think up questions about the context and language of the play , teacher and students are unconsciously involved in the exposure to natural communication.

The teacher is a stimulator and constructive builder of different types of experiences (Way 1967). It is the instructor's job to provide an environment in which acquisition of the target language can take place an atmosphere where students can feel comfortable and they will be more prone to perform up to their competence.

Through drama properly used, the students are into the actuality of the target language. Stevick has suggested that the teacher is "central" to a language class (Stevick 1980),¹ and there is advantage in the fact that our students often heavily on the teacher' instructions. However, the teacher should provide them with as much freedom as possible in their performance preparations to allow for independent thinking. the control function , as Stevick mentioned , helps the teacher with classroom management. Thus, in a play production such as this under the teacher's management there is both structure and creativity.

Effects

When former students recall what they did in their English language class, they point out the play production was a memorable event. Some of them have even told that they started really liking the English language after the stage performance. Others have said that was the first time they had an opportunity to

¹ Stevick E. 1980. Memory, Meaning, Method. Rowley, Mass.: Newsbury house.

speak in the target language , and a few of them said that the English language was not a nightmare anymore .the following is the result of the questioning of students opinions:

1. What did you learn from the acting out?

1. Listening 5

2. Speaking 6

3. Reading 5

4. Writing 0

2. How was the line memorization and recitation helpful to you?

1. Pronunciation 10

2. The comprehension of proper words or phrase or sentences 6

3. Was the play performance fun?

Yes 14 No 2

1. Was it tiring or boring?

Yes: 2 No: 14

2. Did you establish friendship with group members?

Yes: 10 No: 6

3. Did you feel better speaking English in front of people after the performance?

Yes: 12 No: 4

4. Other

Question 7 (“other”) is put in so that the students will feel free to talk about how they feel about language acquisition through this method. Thus they are more or less relaxed and comfortable open –ended question. They are told to write down whatever they would like to say.

Six out of ten responded to question 7. For asked for more opportunities to present the play performance. Two repeated material from question from 3, saying that the performance was enjoyable and memorable. One wrote that he found difficulties in intonation. One said he obtained something that he did not know how to express. There was no response from the remaining six. All through the

academic year, even when they are not involved in a play presentation, the students are constantly encouraged to feel free to express what ever they like. Question 7 gives them the freedom. Many sentences those are artificial or exaggerated. The play as a whole provides an exotic atmosphere in which the students may catch a sense of a different culture and language. Thus they are more or less relaxed and comfortable while gaining the use of a new language. To keep silence if they wish.

A low affective filter

Drama as a way of learning involves a low affective filter (Dulay et al 1982). Line memorization, especially for our students, is not hard work when group members work together. It is often surprised that the students could always memorize extra ordinary long lines when they were told that the only alternative was not act out their part. A play becomes a game with enjoyment factor when it is teamwork. If a learning activity is a game, it will not be hard work for the learners, even though it is demanding. English in the school program is for students' conscious learning, but it has a subsidiary effect on their language acquisition.

Reinforced practice

The interest factor reinforces the students' practice of vocabulary and syntax. They do not get tired of what they like working on. They like melodrama much better than other types of plays. Students bring surprising interpretation to a play new meanings to a situation (Via 1976). Via has suggested that the classic plays do not fit the language is not completely everyday language, but there are not teacher's common sense that must be relied on and the knowledge he/ she has of the interaction process when people decide to communicate with one another.

2.2 Drama motivates young learners

Drama helps children to activate language and have fun. Using drama activities has clear advantages for language learning. It encourages children to speak and gives them the chance to communicate even with limited language, using non verbal communication, such as body movements and facial expressions. The use of drama can reduce the pressure that the students feel, so they become ready to talk sooner. A number of other factors also make drama powerful tool in

the language classroom. Reading dialogue aloud from textbook is different from acting out the same dialogue. Drama involves children at many levels: through their bodies, minds, emotions, language and social interaction.

Dramatizing a text is motivating and it's fun. The same activity can be done at different levels, which means that all the children can do it successfully. Most children like drama activities. English language skills will be developed successfully if students are motivated.

When designing an activity, the most important consideration is probably the degree of interest and involvement it generates. Children like playing games and watching videos in the English language classroom. They also like very much working in a big group, dramatizing, doing a project.

Learners seem to become more motivated about language learning when a video is involved. Drama activities are among the favourites. So why not use video in drama activities?

It is known that young learners are mostly visual learners. Therefore, visual support is of high importance. Drama plus video stimulate the imagination of the pupils, and video materials give language learners visual support, which helps primary school students learn.

Drama is familiar to children

Dramatizing is part of children's lives from an early age. They play at being adults in situations that are part of their lives. Many of these day to day situations are predictable. Children try out different roles in make believe play. They rehearse the language and the "script" of the situation and experience the emotions involved, knowing that they can switch back to reality whenever they want to.

Such pretend play prepares children for the real life situations they will meet later on: it is a rehearsal of the real thing. Make believe encourages their creativity and develops their imagination and at the same time gives them the opportunity to use language that is outside their daily needs.

Language teachers can use this natural desire to act out situations by asking students to pretend to be Little Red Riding Hood, Cinderella, or a robber and to use all the language that grows out of that personality or role.

Drama helps children build confidence

By talking on a role, children can escape from their everyday identity and lose their inhibitions. This is useful with children who are shy about speaking in general and especially, shy about using English, or who don't like joining in group activities. If you give these children special roles, it encourages them to be those characters and to abandon their shyness or embarrassment. This is especially true when you use puppets and masks. The teacher can use roles to encourage children who would otherwise hold back and to control children who dominate the weaker ones

Drama helps children build skills

Children often work in groups or pairs when dramatizing. Children have to make decisions as a group, listen to each other, and cooperate to achieve their aims, find ways of settling their differences, and use the strength of each member of the group.

Drama is appropriate for children's different learning styles.

Dramatizing appeals to all kinds of learners. We receive and process information in different ways: the main ones are through sight, hearing, and our physical bodies. One of these channels tends to be dominant in each of us. When children dramatize, they use all channels, and each child will draw on the one that suits him or her best. This means all the children in all class will be actively involved in the activity, and the language will "enter" through the channel most appropriate for each of them.

All drama activities can be used at a variety of levels. Even if an activity is designed to be an elementary activity, it can be enjoyable for intermediate or more advanced students; conversely, even a drama activity designed for intermediate students may be used with elementary students. You will naturally choose activities and plays that are generally age appropriate and appropriate for your

students' level, and also perhaps because the chosen activities help to reinforce practice of particular language area from the course you are teaching.

Language personalization.

Dramatizing allows children to add an emotion or personality to a text that they have read or listened to.. Take any words, sentences, or short dialogue (two or four lines) and ask children to practice saying it “in character”. By interpreting the words, children make them their own. This also makes the language memorable. Children especially enjoy interpreting the words with a puppet in hand.

Language in context

In the classroom we often expose children to small bits of language, such as individual words. Rather than whole phrases or “chunks”. When speaking children are not often asked to combine the different structures they are learning. Drama is an ideal way to encourage children to guess the meaning of unknown language in a context, which often makes meaning clear. Similarly, children will need to use a mixture of language structures and functions if they are to communicate successfully.

Cross curricular context

When using drama your aims can be more linguistic. You can use topics from other subjects. For example, children can act out scenes from history. You can work ideas and issues that run through the curriculum such as respect for the environment, and road safety for example; students can act out fairy tale about flowers. Important messages can be conveyed and explored through sketches and role plays. Drama can also be used to introduce the culture of the language through stories and customs and with a context for working on different kind of behavior.

The pace of the lesson

Drama can change of a pace or mood to the classroom. It is especially appropriate for young learner's short attention spans, dramatizing is learner – centered, so you can use it to contrast with the more teacher-centered parts of your lesson. It is active so you can use it to make a class more lively after a quieter or individual work.

Practice advice on using drama in the classroom

Choose the right activity

When planning drama activities, teachers should take into account.

- 1) 1.The learner' interests
- 2) The learner's needs
- 3) 3.the learners' ages
- 4) 4.and even time of the day.

If an activity doesn't correspond to student's interests, if the learners are tired because they had a physical training lesson or a test right before the activity, it could be waste of time. Drama activities should not emphasize accuracy and fluency; instead, focus on practicing language. Listen and do the activities are the solution.

Start small

Not all children are good at acting, especially if drama is not part of their first language curriculum, but most children like drama activities. Introduce drama into your classroom in small steps. Start with easy, guided activities (miming), and move on to less controlled activities(plays) as the children gain confidence.

Total physical response (TPR) activities are an excellent way to introduce dramatization: have children respond to language with their bodies, a first step to miming and acting.

Help children realize that they can say things in different ways: loudly, quietly, sadly, angrily, (It's a good way to explore the power of their voices).Choose one word and say in different ways (the children need to see that you are enthusiastic about dramatizing) . Next have the children choose the words and practice saying them in many different ways. This could be done as.

A kind of competition, children enjoy this activity

Give feedback

Drama is an enjoyable way for young English language learners to practice using English. Give feedback on what the children have done, not only the end

product and language but also, the process they went through, the way they cooperated with each other and how they came to decisions. Always find something positive to comment on.

For participation in a drama activity, and especially in a performance, you can give colorful, specially designed certificates to the young actors: “This certificate is awarded to -----for the way he/she acted presented/danced/...”

2.3 Classroom Drama Activities

Listen and do activities can be part of almost any lesson. Such activities help children:

- to acquire English by listening instructions;
- to be active and enjoy doing things in English;
- to use non-verbal clues(e. g gestures)to interpret meanings;
- to get used to understanding general meaning;
- to prepare for spoken interaction;
- to absorb good pronunciation and intonation patterns

Some other drama activities that students enjoy are outlined below.

Miming Practice

Students learn gestures to go with words that are repeated in a story. Then as the teacher reads the story aloud, the children do the actions when they hear the key words.

1. Select a story with repeated words such as the story of the big cat in the big house.

The Big Cat in the Big House

Once upon a time there lived a big cat in a big house.

The big cat had long black hair and a very long, long tail.

The cat was very happy that it was very big.

Next door to the big cat? There lived a small mouse in a small house.

The mouse was very small and so was its house.

The small mouse was very sad that it was very, very small.

2. Select gestures to go with repeated words.

Big

Starting above your head, trace a big circle with your hands.

Cat

Show gestures like cats washing themselves, licking a paw.

House

Draw a house in the air

Long

Stretch both arms out straight to make a long “like”

Tail

Wave an arm behind your back like a cat’s tail.

Happy

Mime that you are happy

Hair

Point to your hair or touch your hair.

Small

With your hands, trace a small circle above the floor.

Sad

Mime that you are sad.

3. Teach students gestures for the repeated words

4. Slowly read the story aloud, and have students do the appropriate gestures as they hear each repeated word.

Miming stories

Students will willingly compose their own story. They welcome the chance to show what they can do with the language.

1. Give students a list of words you want them to know or review. For example, heart, friend, apple, eat, tired.
2. Ask students to compose a story using the words.
3. When they have finished writing their story, have students take turns miming their stories while the rest of the class tries to guess the whole story.

Miming game

Children use actions or gestures to indicate a word and other students can guess the word. This game can be played in teams.(one team shows the actions and asks the other team to guess what the word might be) or as a big group (one student shows/mimes and the others guess).

1. Make a set of miming cards based on the context that students have been studying. For example, if 7-year olds have been studying the names of farm animals, you can prepare cards with the names or pictures of farm animals (goat, cow, hen, etc.) on each card.

2. Next have students select a card and pantomime the item on the card.
3. The other students guess what is being mimed.

Variation; Write down the names of different characters from stories the students have been reading. The name of one character should be written on each card. For example, Tom Sawyer in “Huckleberry Fin”.

Each student selects a card, and then writes a few sentences from the point of view of the character. The rest of the class guesses who the character is.

Transform stories into mini plays

1. Choose a simple story that students have been studying, such as “Goldilocks and three bears”
2. Create a script for the story with as many parts as there are students in your class. Note that you can have several students playing the same part. For instance, you could have three different students’ playing the role of Goldilocks.
3. Have students practice learning the different parts.
4. Have students prepare costumes and props.
5. Put on the play for other classes and/or parents

Students versions or dramatic productions

As watching videos are among the students' favorite activities, try to use videos often and exploit them as much as possible. There are many variations for the use of video. Here are a few;

1. Students watch a fragment, a video sequence with no sound, and guess what happens. Students then create a dramatic scene based on what they have watched. Students then watch the video sequence with sound and compare and contrast their version with the video.

2. Students don't watch, but only listen and try to guess what happens and where the events take place. Students then create a dramatic sequence based on what they have heard. Students then watch the video the sequence and compare and contrast their version with the video.

3. Students watch only a very short fragment and then predict its continuation. Students then act out the continuation. Students then watch the continuation and compare their continuation with the video.

III Poetry in the English foreign language classroom.

3.1 The poem related activities in the language classroom

Poetry is beginning to creep back into the language classroom as teachers realise that it can be used profitably for language learning and students become aware that it is not necessarily boring and abstruse and that, therefore, it can be *enjoyed*.

Poems can serve various purposes: learning vocabulary, becoming sensitive to rhyme and rhythm and thus helping comprehension, grammatical purposes even. Quite often poetry uses repetition and alliteration, making it easier for words and phrases to be remembered and memorized. Like singing—and even better because one does not have to sing in tune—when the initial shyness is overcome most people enjoy reading poems aloud, thereby making them come alive. They can be repeated over and over, for the enjoyment of it, for the rhythm and intonation—and, in the process, a lot of language is learned.¹

Here are a few ideas that can be used in class. We have chosen short—many of them very short—poems, as they are often humorous and less forbidding to tackle. Of course, these poems can (and should) be used with a more conventional approach about the form and meaning.'

Recipe

Mix a pancake,

Stir a pancake,

Pop it in the pan.

Fry the pancake

Toss the pancake,

Catch it if you can.

Christina Rossetti

¹ Decure M. 1991. Rediscovering poems

Aim: vocabulary exercise

Level: intermediate

1. Give the gapped poem. Students try to guess the words that fit the blanks.

They can then compare their findings and try to agree on one version.

2. Give the list of jumbled verbs to put in their proper place.

Exercise

Poem	Jumbled Verbs.
------	----------------

a pancake,	catch
------------	-------

a pancake, .	fry
--------------	-----

it in the pancake	mix
-------------------	-----

the pancake	pop
-------------	-----

the pancake	stir
-------------	------

it in the pan	toss
---------------	------

Mice

I think mice

Are there nice.

Their tails are long,

Their faces small,

They haven't any

skins at all.

Their ears are pink,

Their teeth are white,

They run about

the house at night.

They nibble things

They shouldn't touch

And no one seems
To like them much.
But I think mice
Are nice.

Rose Fyleman

The Society of Authors as the literary representative of the Estate of Rose Fyleman

Aim: meaning and rhyme

Level: lower intermediate

This time the gaps are at the end. Both meaning and rhyme should help students find the missing word. Same exercise as "Recipe."

Exercise

poem	Jumbled words
I think mice	All
Are rather -----	Long
Their tails are -----	Much
--	Nice
Their faces-----	Nice
They haven't any	Night
skins at---	Pink
Their teeth are -----	Small
--	Things
They run about the	Touch
house at-----	White
They nibble-----	
They shouldn't-----	
--	
And no one seems	
To like them-----	
Are-----.	

--	--

Commuter

Commuter—one who spends his life

In riding to and from his wife;

A man who shaves and takes a train

And then rides back to shave again.

E. B. White

From *The Lady Is Cell* by E. B. White. Reprinted by permission of Harper Collins Publishers. (Originally appeared in *The New Yorker*.)

Aim: re-creating a poem from jumbled words

Level: intermediate

The rhyme should help, as well as the rhythm and the structure of the sentences.

1.Explain what a commuter is and that the poem is a humorous definition of a male commuter.

2.Give the gapped text, each gap representing one word, and the list of words. Students try to re-create the poem either individually or in pairs. The words have to be modified according to their function in the sentence.

3.Give the original version. Students must then try to explain why what they wrote was wrong, or illogical (if it was).

Exercise

Commuter —————

—————

—————

Again

Nouns	verbs	Determiners	preposition s	Link words
Life	Ride (2)	A (2)	Back	And (3)
Man	Shave (2)	His(2)	From	Then
Train	Spend	One	In	Who(2)
Wife	Take		To(2)	

Note: If the exercise proves too difficult, write in each blank the part of speech of the word (n, v., a., etc.).

Negro

I am a Negro:

Black as the night is black,

Black like the depths of my Africa.

I've been a slave:

Caesar told me to keep his door-steps clean.

I brushed the boots of Washington.

I've been a worker:

Under my hands the pyramids arose.

I made mortar for the Woolworth Building.

I've been a singer:

All the way from Africa to Georgia

I carried my sorrow songs.

I made ragtime.

I've been a victim:

The Belgians cut off my hands in the Congo.

They lynch me still in Mississippi.

I am a Negro:

Black as the night is black,

Black like the depths of my Africa.

Langston Hughes

From *Selected Poems of Langston Hughes*. Copyright © 1959 by Langston Hughes.
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Aim: definitions

Level: intermediate

This poem describes categories of people and what they do/did, what happened to them.

1. Each aspect of the personality of the poet is followed by two examples. Students have to put them in the proper category. The order in which the two elements come should be easy enough to find as it is chronological, the oldest event first.

2. Students in groups of five can each memorise one part and then recite the poem.

Definitions	Jumbled lines
I am a negro:	The Belgians cut off my hands in the Congo
I've been a slave:	All the way from Africa to Georgia
I've been worker:	I carried my sorrow songs. Black like the depths of my Africa(2) I made mortar for the

<p>I've been a singer:</p> <p>I've been a victim:</p> <p>I am a Negro:</p>	<p>Woolworth Building</p> <p>Black as the night is black(2)</p> <p>I brushed the boots of Washington They lynch me still in Mississippi</p> <p>Under my hands the pyramids arose.</p> <p>I made ragtime.</p> <p>Caesar told me to keep his door-steps clean</p>
---	---

The Sniffle

In spite of her sniffle,
 Isabel's chiffle.
 Some girls with a sniffle
 Would be weepy and tiffle;
 They would look awful,
 Like a rained-on waffle,
 But Isabel's chiffle
 In spite of her sniffle.
 Her nose is more red'
 With a cold in her head,
 But then, to be sure,
 Her eyes are bluer.
 Some girls with a snuffle,
 Their tempers are uffle.
 But when Isabel's snivelly
 She's snivelly civilly,

And when she is snuffly
She's perfectly luffly.

Ogden Nash

© 1941 by Ogden Nash. Reprinted by permission of Curtis Brown, Ltd. From / *Wouldn't Have Missed It, Selected Poems by Ogden Nash*. Andre Deutsch, Ltd., London, 1983.

Aim: understanding a word spelled wrongly thanks to the pronunciation reading aloud

Level: upper intermediate

1.Explain *sniffle* and that, when we have a cold, words get blurred and badly pronounced. Explain *snuffle* and *snivelly*.

2.Give the poem. The students read it aloud to each other in pairs, and in turn, and find the four words that are spelled wrong. They must replace them by the right words.

Key

chiffle: cheerful

tiffle: tearful

uffle: awful

luffly: lovely

What My Lady Did

I asked my lady what she did

She gave me a silver flute and smiled.

A musician I guessed, yes that would explain

Her temperament so wild.

I asked my lady what she did

She gave me a comb inlaid with pearl.

A hairdresser I guessed, yes that would explain

Each soft and billowing curl.

I asked my lady what she did
She gave me a skein of wool and left.
A weaver I guessed, yes that would - explain
Her fingers long and deft.

I asked my lady what she did
She gave me a slipper trimmed with lace.
A dancer I guessed, yes that would explain
Her suppleness and grace.

I asked my lady what she did
She gave me a picture not yet dry.
A painter I guessed, yes that would explain
The steadiness of her eye.

I asked my lady what she did
She gave me a fountain pen of gold.
A poet I guessed, yes that would explain
The strange stories that she told.

I asked my lady what she did
She told me—and oh, the grief!
I should have guessed, she's under arrest
My lady was a thief!

Roger McGough

Aim: predictions vocabulary (objects, jobs) description of body and personality

Level: intermediate

1. Again, this is a poem with a lot of repetitions and similar structures which will enable the student to guess what is coming.

2. Give the gapped poem. Students try to guess the object missing in the second line, the occupation missing in the third line, and put the fourth lines (given in jumbled order) in their proper place.

Exercise

I asked my lady what she did
She gave me a silver....and smiled.
A ...I guessed, yes that would explain
.....

I asked my lady what she did
She gave me a inlaid with pearl.
.....

I asked my lady What she did.
She gave me a ... of wool and left.
A ...I guessed, yes that would explain
.....

I asked my lady What she did.
She gave me a... trimmed with lace.
A ...I guessed, yes that would explain
.....

I asked my lady What she did.
She gave me a ... not yet dry.
A ...I guessed, yes that would explain
.....

I asked my lady What she did.

She gave me a ...of gold.

A ...I guessed, yes that would explain

.....

I asked my lady What she did.

She told me ... and oh , the grief!

I should have guessed , she's under arrest

Jumbled Words

Occupations: *dancer, thief, weaver, poet, musician, painter, hairdresser.*

Objects: *slipper, fountain pen, picture, comb, flute, skein.*

Jumbled Last Lines

The strange stories that she told.

Her fingers long and deft.

Her temperament so wild.

Her suppleness and grace.

Each soft and billowing curl.

The steadiness of her eye.

Life Is Fine

I went down to the river,

I set down on the bank.

I tried to think but couldn't,

So I jumped in and sank.

I came up once and hollered!

I came up twice and cried!

If that water hadn't a-been so cold

I might've sunk and died.

But it was

Cold in that water!

It was cold!

I took the elevator

Sixteen floors above the ground.

I thought about my baby

And thought I would jump down.

I stood there and I hollered!

I stood there and I cried!

If it hadn't a-been so high

I might've jumped and died.

But it was

High up there!

It was high!

So since I'm still here livin',

I guess I will live on.

I could've died for love—

But for livin' I was born.

Though you may hear me holler,

And you may see me cry-

I'll be dogged, sweet baby,.

If you gonna see me die.

Life is fine!

Fine as wine!

Life is fine!

Langston Hughes

From *Selected Poems of Langston Hughes*. Copyright © 1939 by Langston Hughes.
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Aim: use of tenses and modals

Level: intermediate to advanced

This poem is rich in all sorts of tenses and modals. Students should put the verbs in their proper form and find the modal where (*m*) is indicated. Two blanks indicate a compound tense or a modal + verb.

Note: the form *a-been* will be explained at the end, when the exercise is corrected.

Exercise:

I ... (*go*) down to the river,

I ...(*set*) down on the bank

I (*try - think*) but ... (m-not)

So I...(*jump*) in and....(*sink*)

I... (*come*) up once and ...(*holler*)!

I ... (*come*) up twice and ... (*cry*)

If that water ... not ... (*be*) so cold

I (*m - sink*) and ... (*die*).

But it was

Cold in that water!

It was cold!

I (*take*) the elevator

Sixteen floors above the ground

I(*think*) about my baby

And(*think*) I(*m - jump*) down.

I ... (*stand*) there and I ...(*holler*)

I ... (*stand*) there and I ...(*cry*)

If it (*not - be*) so high

I (*m - jump*) and ... (*die*).

But it was

High up there!

It was high!

So since I ... here (still - live)

I ... (guess)I ... (live), on.

I (m-die)for love..

But for .. (live) I ... (be) born.

Though you(*m - hear*) me (*holler*),

And you(*m - see*) me ... (*cry*)

I ... (*be*) dogged, sweet baby,

If you ... (go - see) me ... (die)

Life is fine!

Fine as wine!

Life is fine!

Puns

Aim: comprehension of puns

Level: upper intermediate to advanced

1. Puns are frequent in limericks. Explain the origin, use, and form of the limerick.

2. Give the following poems. The students must find the puns and explain them.

On His Books

When I am dead, I hope it may be said:

"His sins were scarlet, but his books were read."

Hilaire Belloc

"On His Books" from *Complete Verse* by Hilaire Belloc. Reprinted by permission of The Peters Fraser & Dunlop Group Ltd.

Limerick 1

An indolent vicar of Bray

His roses allowed to decay.

His wife, more alert,

Bought a powerful squirt

And said to her spouse, "Let us spray."

Limerick 2

There was a young girl, a sweet lamb,
Who smiled as she entered a tram.
After she had embarked,
The conductor remarked,
"Your fare." And she said, "Yes, I am."

All's Well That Ends Well

A Friend of mine was married to a scold,
To me he came, and all his troubles told.
Said he, "She's like a woman raving mad."
"Alas! my friend," said I, "that's very bad!"
"No, not so bad," said he; "for, with her, true
I had both house and land, and money too."
"That was well," said I;
"No, not so well," said he;
"For I and her own brother
Went to law with one another;
I was cast, the suit was lost,
And every penny went to pay the cost."
"That was bad," said I;
"No, not so bad," said he: "
For we agreed that he the house should keep,
And give to me four score of Yorkshire sheep
All fat, and fair, and fine, they were to be."
"Well, then," said I, sure that was well for thee?"
"No, not so well," said he;
"For, when the sheep I got,

They every one died of the rot."
 "That was bad," said I;
 "No, not so bad," said he;
 "For I had thought to scrape the fat
 And keep it in an oaken vat;
 Then into tallow melt for winter store."
 "Well, then," said I, "that's better than before?"
 " 'Twas not so well," said he;
 "For having got a clumsy fellow
 To scrape the fat and melt the tallow;
 Into the melting fat the fire catches,
 And, like brimstone matches,
 Burnt my house to ashes."
 "That was bad," said I;
 "No! not so bad," said he; "for, what is best,
 My scolding wife has gone among the rest."

Anonymous

Aim: comprehension consequences Level: advanced

1. Students read the poem.
2. They try to fill the columns, defining the various elements of the story and explaining the negative and positive consequences for each.

Exercise

<i>Element</i>	<i>Negative consequence</i>	<i>Positive consequence</i>
<i>Ex. He married</i>	<i>He got a bad tempered wife</i>	<i>His wife was rich</i>

Additional questions and work:

Does this poem remind you of another story? Which one?

What is funny in this poem?

How old/recent is this poem? Why?

Write a prose narrative of this story.

3.2. Reading, Writing, and Performing Poetry

The theme of this issue of *English Teaching Forum* is poetry. The poetry-related activities in this lesson plan can be used alone or in conjunction with the poems and articles found elsewhere in this issue. These activities will help you introduce your students to poetry in general and take them through the steps of reading and interpreting poetry in English. There are also activities to encourage students to write their own poems. You can select as many or as few activities as you wish.¹

Talking about Poetry

To introduce your students to poetry, you might want to begin by having a general discussion about poetry.

1. Activate your students' background knowledge by asking such questions as:

Do you like poetry? Why or why not?

Who are your favorite poets?

Do you prefer reading poetry or listening to it being read aloud?

Do you ever write poetry yourself?

What language do you like to read poetry in?

.2. Ask your students: "What are some words that come to mind when you think about poetry?" Write the words on the board as students say them.

¹ Jonson K. 2006 Reading writing and performing poetry English teaching forum. P. 44

3. Add the word *discovery* (unless a learner has already said it; in that case, go back and re-emphasize the idea of poetry as a method of discovery).

4. Tell your students that U.S. Poet Laureate Ted Kooser said: "The writing and reading of poetry is the sharing of wonderful discoveries."

5. Ask your students:

What is meant here by a discovery?

Give some examples of things you can discover in a poem.

How would the discovery process be different for reading poetry than for writing it?

6. Tell your students that a former U.S. Poet Laureate, Robert Frost, said: "A poem begins in delight and ends in wisdom." Compare his quotation to Kooser's quotation.

7. Ask/tell your students:

What topics should a poet laureate write about? Make a list.

Are there any topics he or she should avoid? Why or why not?

Pretend you have just been named poet laureate of your city/school/university. Write your inauguration speech. Begin by deciding what points you think are important. If you are working in a group, everyone can help write the speech.

Understanding Poetic Devices

Poetry in preliterate societies was passed from generation to generation by a strong oral tradition. Poetic devices such as the ones listed below helped the performers, including troubadours and minstrels, remember the structure and words of the poems they recited. Introduce your students to some of these poetic devices to help them write and memorize their own poems.

1. Ask your students if they know any poetic devices. They might already be familiar with metaphors, rhyming, and other devices. Ask them to give some examples.

2. Go over with your students the terms listed below. Give students examples and have them write some of their own examples.

Alliteration is the repetition of the same sounds, usually consonant sounds, at the beginning of words or stressed syllables. Some examples of alliteration are: cute cats; the sounds of silence; my mother made marshmallow cookies.

Assonance is the repetition of identical or similar vowel sounds, especially in stressed syllables, with different consonant sounds between them. Example: This chicken is similar to that one.

Imagery is the use of vivid or figurative language to represent objects, actions, or ideas. A poem has effective imagery when its words allow you to imagine that you can see, hear, smell, touch, or taste the things the poem describes.

Kennings are compound, figurative phrases used in place of a name or noun, especially in Old English and Old Norse poetry. For example, the sea was often called the *whale road* and a sword might be called a *battle friend*.

Metaphors are comparisons of two unlike things made without using *like* or *as*. The two things being compared are usually linked by a form of the verb *to be*. Examples: I am a rock. You are my sunshine.

Onomatopoeia is the use of sounds associated with the objects or actions they refer to. For example, the word *buzz* sounds like the sound a bee makes. The word *hiss* sounds like a snake and the word *chirp* makes the sound of a bird. Using such words in a poem about these subjects creates a link between sound and meaning and allows the reader (or listener) to experience the poem more richly.

Personification is the assignment of human qualities, actions, or form to inanimate objects or abstract ideas. Examples: The wind coughed. The house groaned in the night. Love knocked on my door.

Rhyme is the repetition of the same sound in two different words. Poems do not have to rhyme, but they often do. Example: Words that rhyme with *rose* are *toes, nose, goes, foes, throws, shows*.

Similes are comparisons of two unlike things, usually using *like* or *as*. Example: My love is like a red, red rose.

3. Ask your students to think of any one-syllable word and write down all the words that rhyme with it. Remind them that words that rhyme are not always spelled in similar ways. You can begin the exercise by asking the class to give examples of words that rhyme with *rhyme*: *dime, lime, chime, grime, mime, slime, time, thyme, prime, I'm*. Tell students they can rhyme longer words by rhyming the final syllable or syllables. Examples: *nation, station, concentration, simulation*.

4. Review the definition of *kenning*. Write the below lists on the blackboard, and then see if your students can match the kennings to the nouns they represent.

Wave traveler	King
Whale road or island encircle	Parrot
Ring giver	Woman
Jewelry tree or peace weaver	Battle
Storm of swords	Teacher
Night caller	Boat
Homework giver	Sea

After doing this matching activity, encourage students to write their own kennings.

5. Divide the class into groups. Have each group write a poem using at least three of the poetic devices you discussed. The groups can choose their three devices, or you can assign different ones to each group.

Interpreting Poems

As former U.S. Poet Laureate Robert Frost said, "Poetry is what's lost in translation." There are metaphors, similes, rhythms, and nuances that can't be translated word for word in everyday life, but even more so in poetry. This is one reason that reading and writing poetry in a foreign language classroom can often be confusing. However, that is all the more reason to keep reading and writing, as a means to understand deeper levels of the language. Encourage students to see the images a poem evokes and to talk about the words and phrases that don't translate.

Activity

Look at the poems "Bessie Dreaming Bear" and "Moonflowers" that appear in this issue and study the discussion questions for each poem. Ask your students similar questions about other poems you might use in the classroom. Remember to discuss imagery, metaphors, and other figurative language and to look for meanings that aren't stated explicitly. We often call this "reading between the lines."

Using Poetry for Language Acquisition

Activity 1: *Scrambled Poem*

Take photocopies of a poem and cut them into strips so that each strip contains one line of the poem. Give a complete set of strips (the whole poem) to each student or pair or group of students, depending upon how you want students to work. Have students try to put the strips in correct order by analyzing the poem and/or by listening to you read it. The first time you do this activity, it is good to use a short poem that has a chronological order, such as "Fog" (below). A variation of this activity would be to use longer poems and to put a different verse/stanza on each strip.

Fog

by Carl Sandburg

The fog comes on little cat feet.

It sits looking

over harbor and city

on silent haunches

and then moves on.

Instead of distributing copies of the lines of the poem, you can write it on the blackboard in scrambled order; for example:

over harbor and city

and then moves on.

The fog comes on

silent haunches

It sits looking

on little cat feet.

Then ask students to write the lines in the correct order by analyzing the poem and/or by listening to you read it.

Activity 2: *Reading with Expression*

Have students practice reciting poems with different emotions. They can read the same poem as if they are angry, sad, happy, proud, etc.

Writing Original Poems

Just as reading poetry helps us see how a lot can be said in very few words, writing poetry helps us trim away side issues and focus on what we really want to say. The activities that follow use various methods to help students create their own poems.

Activity i: *Everyday Objects*

As a prewriting activity, give students copies of poems by Ted Kooser or Robert Frost. Discuss with your students how these poets bring everyday objects to life.'

When students are ready to begin working on their own poems, ask them to pick an object, any object, and to write down everything that comes to mind about that object. Tell students that the idea is to brainstorm and start thinking about the object in different ways. When they write their poems, they might use only a little bit of what they initially wrote about their objects, or perhaps none of it.

Example: chair

What does it look like (size, color, shape, special features, etc.)?

Purple, soft, big .

It has big arms,

so I'm surrounded by purple.

Impressions in the seat cushion where I've been sitting

Purple like a grape or an eggplant

What does it feel like?

comfortable, soft, smooth, firm

I can read, watch TV, relax.

I can put a stool in front of it and put my feet on the stool and really relax

It's heavy so it's hard to move it by myself.

What does it sound like? (If it really has no sound, imagine a sound or assign a sound to another object, which may or may not have a sound.)

It sounds like feathers. If feathers don't make noise, who cares? It sounds like feathers. It also sounds like music because I listen to music in the chair. And chimes—because if I close my eyes while sitting in the chair with the window open, I can hear the wind chimes of my neighbor.

What does it smell like? (If it really has no smell imagine a smell.)

It smells soft like my soap and my bathrobe. (I sit there after a shower.)

It smells like the flowers in the garden. (The chair is near the window.)

What does it taste like? (If it really has no taste, or if you don't want to taste it, imagine a taste.)

I really don't want to taste my chair, but I can imagine the taste of things I might taste while sitting in the chair. Popcorn, cashews, both of them crunchy.

Activity 2: *Adopt a Different Point of View*

In this activity, you will ask your students to write from a point of view other than their own. Tell them to imagine that they are an object or an animal or some other person. Then instruct them to ask themselves questions about the object, animal, or person they selected.

You can give students an example like the following: What if I were the chair? Would people like me? Would I rather be a different color? Would I rather be in another part of the room? Would I like or dislike the persons who sit on me?

After students have written notes about the answers to such questions, ask them to write a poem from the point of view of the subject they chose.

Activity 3: *Haiku*

A haiku is a Japanese form of poetry that has seventeen syllables, divided into three unrhymed lines using the formula 5-7-5. The first line has five syllables; the second line has seven syllables; the third line has five syllables. Usually the first line names or refers to the topic, the second line describes or exemplifies it, and the last line restates the topic in different words. Traditionally, the haiku contains imagery and includes a word that indicates in which season the haiku is set. Snow can indicate winter, daffodils can represent spring, etc., but the season word can also be more, subtle. Here is a sample haiku:

An orange pumpkin
"Waits to be picked in the field
Surrounded by friends

(The word that indicates the season is *pumpkin*, traditionally associated with fall.)

Claiming poetic license, you can be flexible with some of the rules of haiku, especially in the EFL classroom. Here are some basic guidelines:

1. Make sure your students understand what a haiku-is. Give examples.
2. You can assign topics or allow students to write about whatever they choose. Brainstorm with the class to generate some ideas for haikus.
3. As a class, write one or more group haikus. Encourage students to contribute ideas, words, or entire lines while you write the haiku on the blackboard. This is a good time to check that students understand the difference between syllables and words.
4. Have small groups or individuals write their own haikus, later sharing them with the class.

Activity 4: *Cinquain*

A cinquain, which has five lines, is a good structure to use to write poems about a particular subject. You could have students write a cinquain about a local event, a national holiday, their favorite activities, or anything they choose. The "formula" for a cinquain is:

Line 1: 1 word, a noun

Line 2: 2 words describing the noun

Line 3: 3 words describing an action

Line 4: 4 words describing feelings

Line 5: 1 word, a noun that is a different word for the first word

Write the outline on the blackboard. Then ask students to follow the outline to write their own cinquains. A cinquain about shopping might look like this:

Markets

busy, crowded

Farmers sell vegetables

It's so much fun

Shopping

Rewriting

Remind students that they do not have to write a perfect poem on the first *try*. Most professional poets make many changes and write many drafts of their poems before they consider them to be ready for publication (or performance).

Using Poems in Other Lessons,

The reading and writing of poetry does not have to be limited to a lesson on poetry. Include poems in your other lessons when appropriate. It can be fun to sometimes have students write a poem about a particular topic after a lesson on that topic. You can encourage them to use particular vocabulary words in their

poems, too. When you assign pre-determined structures, such as those used for haikus and cinquains, students have the opportunity to use the language both creatively and with discipline.

Performing Poetry

Part 1: *Introduce the Poem*

Discuss the meanings and interpretations of one or more; previously selected poems. This can be done in small groups, especially if each group will perform a different poem. Ask, or be sure students discuss, such questions as:

What does the narrator (or poet) want to do?

What does this poem remind you of?

Which words are literal? Which words are symbolic or have figurative meanings or other connotations?

What sensory images (sight, smell, touch, hearing, taste) are evoked?

What are the emotions and moods of the poem?

What sound effects can you find in the poem (alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia)?

Part 2: *Preparing Students to Perform*

Before students begin rehearsing, discuss with them various aspects of performing by asking them the following questions. 1. *How can you use your voice, your body, and the performance space to enhance the meaning of the poem?*

Ideas to discuss:

Voice: You can modulate your voice, make it soft or loud, high-pitched or deep, speak slowly or quickly, use pauses, etc.

Body: You can change your posture, use mime and gestures, etc.

Performance Space: You can move around, move closer to or farther from the audience, hide in corners, make use of any furnishings, windows, doors, etc.

3. How do actors prepare for their performances?

Some tips from actors and other performers:

- Consciously try to relax before your rehearsals and performances: take deep breaths, close your eyes, visualize your performance, bend over and make yourself go limp like a rag doll.
- Practice breath control. You do not want to run out of breath and have to pause in the middle of a line where you do not want to pause. Speak from your diaphragm instead of your mouth.
- Warm up your voice and your body, just as you would before singing or playing a sport.
- Practice projecting your voice to the back of the room without yelling.
- Practice enunciation and articulation. Repeating tongue twisters can help.
- Rehearse the material until you know it so perfectly that your recitation seems natural.
- Practice establishing eye contact with the audience.
- Practice using facial expressions, but don't exaggerate unnecessarily. Rehearse in front of a mirror to get the look you want.
-

Part 3: ***Rehearsing the Poem***

1. Tell students they will be able to rehearse their performance in small groups.

2. Teach students how to give constructive feedback about the performances they will watch. Remind students that the purpose of feedback is to help students do a better job the next time. Tell students their feedback should include honest, helpful answers to the following questions:

- Did the performer modulate his/her voice effectively and appropriately?

- Did the performer enunciate clearly and pronounce words correctly?
- Did the performer use his/her body to convey emotions and figurative meanings?
- Did the performer use the space of the room effectively?
- What emotion or emotions did the performer convey? Were these the same emotions the performer intended to convey?

3. Divide students into groups and have them perform their poems individually while the rest of the group evaluates their performance (and later gives them feedback).

Part 4: *Performing the Poem*

Allow students to incorporate the feedback into a new performance of the same poem in front of the class during the next class period.

Organizing Poetry Slams

In the 1980s, Marc Kelly Smith of Chicago, Illinois, introduced a new element to oral poetry by instituting *poetry slams*. Poetry slams are events where poets, new or unknown or otherwise, can go on the stage to an open mike (a microphone open for use by whoever wants to step up to it) and share their own poems in short time increments. Judges rate the performances, and at

Organize a Poetry Slam in Your Classroom

Make reading and writing and reciting poetry fun! The Poetry Slam Incorporated website (<http://www.poetryslam.com>) suggests rules to follow when organizing a slam. Here are some guidelines you might want to follow:

- Whoever recites a poem must also be the person who wrote it.
- Set a time limit. National Slam suggests three minutes, plus an extra ten seconds without penalty. Anyone who goes overtime has points deducted from the score. You might want your time limit to be shorter, depending on the level of the students.

- Focus on the poetry. National Slam suggests no props, costumes, or musical instruments.

- Establish scoring rules, if you want them, and how you will select judges. National Slam suggests **five** judges, selected from the audience (in your case, the classroom). Each judge gives the poet a score from 1 to 10. Drop the high and low scores, and then add the middle three together for a total of 3 to 30.

- Have a Master of Ceremonies (MC) who can speak spontaneously without a script and encourage the "audience" to respond to the poets or the judges.

Although a poetry slam is a type of competition, in the classroom it is good to make it more collective than competitive. Involve the entire class. Make it a regular event by holding a poetry slam every month or so. Have students take turns being poets, judges, and hosts. Keep the classroom atmosphere light and accepting, the limits wide. Encourage all forms of poetry on any topic. The overall slam and the experience of the slam are more important than any one individual contribution.

3.3 Dramatizing poem

Drama is a word that often sends waves of panic through an English teacher. Chaos, noise, and unstructured pandemonium are some of the fears that spring to mind. Yes, drama can be an important part of an English curriculum, but how to implement it in a way that will enrich language, rather than promote anarchy? How to structure it? How to assess it? How can an English teacher be proficient in all areas of an ever-widening English curriculum? The answer is, the teacher does not need to struggle in splendid isolation, but can tap into the expertise of colleagues.¹

During the 1999-2000 school year, the drama and English departments of ISH completed several joint projects. The projects not only were enriching and

¹ Helen Lucas and Tuomas Hiltunen 2002 From page to stage English teaching forum p 12

beneficial to students, but were also rewarding for the teachers involved. We decided to formalize our ad hoc cooperative efforts throughout the year and do a project together from start to finish. We selected grade 10 English—a class of nine highly motivated, imaginative and responsible students—and William Golding's famous novel *Lord of the Flies*.

Lord of the Flies was chosen for several reasons. First, it was one of the available class texts at the school. Second, the plot easily converts to a drama that students will love—a chance to dress up, paint their faces, run around yelling out chants, and wave sticks in the air! Furthermore, there is flexibility in the number of characters needed. Finally, it has a very high interest level for all students. In the story, a group of English school boys are evacuated by plane during the Second World War. The plane crashes on an uninhabited island somewhere in the Pacific. In the novel, Golding explores the gradual disintegration of order amongst the boys once the restraining force of civilization has been removed.

Preparation

As the two teachers involved in the project, Helen, from the English department, and Tuomas, from the drama department, we had several extended meetings to discuss possible drama assignments, using the novel as a springboard. We wanted to structure the project so that it would test the students' ability to identify the main themes of the novel and present them in another format and genre. The student actors would be offered a forum to develop their movement, acting, voice, and speech skills, enabling them to transfer their ideas and insights into a performance. We wanted to give the students creative freedom and a sense of ownership of their work. Also, it was important to structure our available time well, so that we could work around the constraints of schedules. We decided to narrow the project down to writing and performing an abridged version of Golding's beautiful fable.

Behind the school there is a rocky area near the car park that looks a bit like an island. The drama would be performed outside on the rocks, in an open space, with

no fixed stage or setting. The "island" allowed for drama that was unexpected, unconventional, and not boring. It provided an opportunity for creating precisely the acting area suited for a promenade performance in which the moving audience would define the acting area.

We prepared the following outline with clear parameters to guide the class through all the stages of the dramatization project.

Introduction

This is a group project for 8 to 12 students. You are to write an abridged dramatic version of the novel *Lord of the Flies*, then perform it. This project will assess your ability to identify the main themes of the story and to present and develop them in another format and genre. It will also reflect your understanding of plot, setting, and character.

Steps to follow:

1. Reading

Keep a reading journal as you read the novel. For each chapter, make notes on plot, theme, character, and setting. This will prove invaluable later on, in deciding which scenes to include in the script.

2. Elements of the novel.

A. Plot

Which scenes from the novel are essential for the abridged version?

B. Theme

What are the main ideas or issues and how will you convey them?

C. Character

Which characters will be included in the script? How do these characters change through the novel? How will you show this visually in the drama?

D. Setting

Which parts of the island will be used for each scene? How will you convey these different locations on the stage?

3. Writing

Subdivide your group into pairs. Each pair will be allocated different scenes, for which they are responsible for writing a script.

4. Discussion

Once the scripts are written, each pair will present their part of the scene to the rest of the group. Check that the styles of writing are not too different and there is a cohesive feel to the final complete script.

Ensure that the four elements of the novel are adequately covered. Allocate roles and read through the script. Check that the time length is appropriate. Discuss ways of conveying on stage, a sense of character and setting.

5. Rehearse

Appoint one group member who has a smaller part to be the director. After several rehearsals, be ready to show your teacher what you have done so far. This will provide you with an opportunity to get feedback and suggestions. Incorporate these suggestions into your additional rehearsals, including a dress rehearsal on the stage.

6. Performance

You will be assessed on the script and on your performance. Ensure that your teacher has a copy of the complete script before the performance. Our next step was to actually present the idea for a drama performance to the class. Students were given class time to read the novel, then we had a pizza night and showed Peter Brooks film *Lord of the Flies*. We explained our ideas for the performance to the class, whetting their appetite with possible approaches. The response from the students was overwhelmingly positive. As anticipated, they were hooked by the idea and enthusiastically rose to the challenge. Helen would be responsible for helping the students write the script, and Tuomas would be responsible for helping them with the performance.

Helen did several lessons on how to abridge a text. In groups, students were given a fairy tale to present in a tableau form that included all of the important parts of the story. After each presentation, the class discussed whether the scenes

chosen were essential, and whether they had a clear beginning, middle, and end. Students progressed from tableau to dialogue, and from fairy tale to novel.

After brainstorming sessions, the students developed a list of which scenes and characters needed to be included in, an abridged version of Golding's work. At first they listed 15 events, but after revising, the list was narrowed to eight scenes. Initially, students were hesitant to rearrange the plot sequence or to exercise artistic license, because they appreciated the delicate structure of the book. However, they made the transition successfully from a novel to be read to a script to be spoken. The class was divided into groups, with each group allocated certain scenes to write. The students wrote two drafts of their scenes and received feedback on them. The complete script with all the scenes written by the groups was read, and further revisions were made as needed. This final script was graded by Helen. (See appendix 1 for a selection from the student-written script.)

Practice

When it came to allocating parts, everyone knew exactly which role they wanted to play, and fortunately, everyone wanted a different character. Characters did not need to be male, because, as we explained to the students, it is the function rather than the gender of the character that is important in Golding's work. As a practical matter, however, the gender of several characters in the novel needed to be changed, because there were girls in the class, but no female characters in the novel. The characters of Simon, Percival, and Eric became Simone, Percivilia, and Erica. This supported Golding's thesis that all possibilities are latent in every person. A student with a supporting role offered to take on the responsibility of director, and our role as teachers was kept to that of facilitators.

The student ensemble determined where each scene would take place and what props needed to be made. In keeping with the scope of an abridged version, students had to exercise economy in choosing and simplifying props, trusting the audience to fill in the gaps. These props would serve the actors' performances and enhance the audience's imagination. The props used were a pig's head, poles,

spears, rocks, a conch, spectacles, and fabric for the "beast from the air." The art department became involved in building the props, creating yet another cross-curricular link in the school.

The first stage of the rehearsals required the students to identify with the characters, discuss their situations and objectives, and analyze the play even further. Then formal rehearsals began. The level of student enthusiasm could be seen in their desire to have weekend rehearsals and in the ever-expanding size of the audience they wanted!

The acting area required the students to develop voice projection skills. Tuomas used articulation exercises to improve the students' ability to formulate and communicate thoughts clearly, and to interact with their fellow thespians and the audience in a seemingly effortless manner. The rehearsals on the rocky "island" were practical, including speech and text work as well as movement on stage.

Performance

The students' performance was outstanding. They threw themselves wholeheartedly into their roles. What was most impressive was their ability to sense the mood of the audience and to ad lib accordingly. The script took on a life of its own. The students were able to effectively play off each other and perform as a cohesive team. Their sense of enthusiasm and enjoyment was infectious, adding to the pleasure of the audience.

The student actors were given the challenge and freedom to explore their interpretation of the text. One outstanding student approached his role through movement and behaviour. Another student amazed many of his teachers and classmates with his stellar performance. This was an unexpected surprise, because the student is usually very quiet and not an obvious star or extrovert. This formerly shy student had discovered his role through voice and speech.

The audience numbered about fifty, including many parents. Our advertising around the school had been effective, creating interest and enthusiasm among students from other classes. This was due in part to the impact of the poster, which

was designed and produced by our students. Many in the audience commented on the high quality of the students' performance, the interactive approach, and the ideal setting of the rocks. In retrospect, however, it would have been better to have had several performances with smaller audiences.

This success reinforces our belief that drama enhances the English classroom. untapped potential, but often they are fearful of taking risks and lack confidence. Given the opportunity to work on a team project, these students can shine. Observing our students reach this level of creative and artistic potential was the most rewarding aspect of the project.

Conclusion

To answer the questions posed at the start of this article, one way to effectively integrate drama into the curriculum is through team teaching. By combining our expertise in teaching English and teaching drama, we had much more to bring to our students. International schools receive students with varying levels of English proficiency, and drama can help them in many ways. Drama activities give students an opportunity to express their ideas and personality with confidence, to take risks and explore new roles. Ensemble work allows students to build relationships of trust and friendship. The students had to carefully consider the text in order to write a script, thus enriching their language skills.

We gave clear guidelines at all stages of the project. This provided a sense of security and an intellectually safe place for students to work and express themselves. Clear criteria were set for assessing the performance (see appendix 2), making it easier for us as teachers to agree on the grades together. We did not focus exclusively on the final production, but evaluated the whole process. We considered how students had grown through the rehearsals and how well they interacted with each other. Because of their positive attitude, eagerness to learn, level of commitment, and inherent talents, they all received high grades.

Lord of the Flies made a successful transition from page to stage. The student actors had an experience that will stay with them. They found the strength and confidence to open up, both to themselves and to each other. Similarly, we gained

a great deal, not only from working in partnership as teachers, but also from being part of the student team. We found that we were Warners as much as teachers. Our students taught us that, given the opportunity, they could shine. But they did more than shine, they exceeded our expectations.

IV. Conclusion.

To sum up, I consider that drama and poems are a natural part of early childhood education. Children in all parts of the world are taught a wide variety of poems either by their family members or their teachers. Many teachers working with children learning English as a Foreign Language also know the value of children's verse in the young learner classroom.

Experienced teachers know that songs and poems are an excellent way to begin or end of lesson. At the beginning of a lesson they can keep children make the transition from their native language into English as the lesson warm up. Whenever possible it is best to select a piece of verse that is directly related to the content of the lesson. For example, if you are teaching body parts, you could easily begin the class by doing the chant "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes". At the end of the lesson a good way to dismiss the children is by chanting a piece of verse.¹ This may even be done while children are lining up to leave or while they are waiting at the door for dismissal bell to ring.

Once the key vocabulary has been presented, teachers find it useful to introduce young learners to pieces of verse one line at a time, the teacher says one line of the song or poem and then the children repeat the line. This procedure continues until all the lines of the target piece of verse have been said and repeated.

Next the learners repeat the entire selection of verse using props or actions to help them remember the words. In addition, teachers may have children clap out the syllables of a piece of verse as a way to keep young learners actively involved.²

¹Hanauer, D. S. 2008. The task of poetry reading and S. L. A. Applied Linguistics. Traham C 1980. *Jazz Chants for children*. Oxford university press.

Despite the many good intentions of both students and teachers oftentimes it is really difficult to achieve fluency and the creative use of English. In most cases students sit in the classroom and either listen to the teacher or answer their prepared homework. However they do not think they are learning English unless

they are doing the talking and participating. Using drama technique maximizes the students creative involvement, both linguistically and artistically. Following the principle that people work harder and learn more effectively, if they are interested in what they are doing the students are encouraged to choose the play and roles they want to act out. The interest factor reinforces their practice of vocabulary and grammar they do not get tired of what they like working on.¹ Using drama creates a special atmosphere in which students learn with enjoyment. They are delighted to be involved in the physical actions and the actual language of the play. On stage, through speaking and acting they get rid of an important barrier to language learning and communicating in target language.

"Using drama technique helps students discover their real talent to act as it can be a valuable theatrical experience and a confidence booster. It can significantly help students improve speaking and listening skills and their confidence to use English. Working closely together leads to the formation of close friendship. The participants are treated equally. Besides they realize the necessity of group work as the bases of success".

Drama technique is not universal panacea, a means that can help achieve all teaching and learning objectives nevertheless, as the practice shows it can be effectively applied to teaching English to students of all levels; to a wide array of dramas (plays, tales, etc) ; in classes with different number of student.

Although it is fun, it is a lot of work as well. To successfully use it teacher should be trained and willing to practice this technique.

¹ Meyer and Sugg 1960. Never catch them in the dark. London: Modern English Pub

² Abbs. B. Snapshot. London: Longman. 1999

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