Drama for Social Justice in ELT

—

Riah Werner, March 29, 2018, TESOL

Drama: a composition in verse or prose intended to portray life or character or to tell a story usually involving conflicts and emotions through action and dialogue and typically designed for theatrical performance.

Drama: a composition in verse or prose intended to portray life or character or to tell a story usually involving conflicts and emotions through action and dialogue and typically designed for theatrical performance.

Benefits of Drama for ELT

- **Oral proficiency and pronunciation** (Galante & Thomson, 2016; Greenfader, Brouillette & Farkas, 2014; Kao, Carkin & Hsu, 2011; Ng & Boucher-Yip, 2010; Thirsk & Solak, 2012)
- **Grammar acquisition** (Lizasoain & Ortiz de Zárate, 2009; O'Gara, 2008)
- **Writing skills and literacy development** (Bournot-Trites, Belliveau, Spiliotopolous & Séror, 2007; McMaster, 1998; Murray, Salas & Ni Thoghdha, 2015)
- **Motivation and confidence** (Al-Mahrooqi & Tabakow, 2013; Dicks & LeBlanc, 2009; Miccoli, 2003; Reed & Seong, 2013; Ryan-Scheutz & Colangelo, 2004)
- **Critical thinking, imagination and creativity** (Albalawi, 2014; Belliveau & Kim, 2013)
- **Cross cultural understanding and contextualized communication** (Belliveau & Kim, 2013)
- **Higher results on achievement tests** (Gorjian, Moosavinia & Jabipour, 2010)

Drama and Social Justice

Drama for social and political change has a long history

Plays often engage current social issues

Drama can envision a new future or re-examine the past

Allows for representations that are missing from other media

Embodiment

Embodied Cognition: Our brains are shaped by our bodies
Shifts the cognitive load from the mind to the body

Gesture and Nonverbal Communication: Physical modes of communication, in addition to or in place of language

Habitus: Societal rules that influence behavior, govern how we use and hold our bodies and reproduce the status quo
Drama creates opportunities to change our "embodied history"

The ADDRESSING Model (Hays, 1996)

Age

Disability

Dialect and Language*

Religion

Ethnicity

Social Status

Sexual Orientation

Indigenous Heritage

National Origin

Gender

Emotion

Emotional Intelligence: the ability to understand and name feelings, and use them to guide one's actions and behavior Enhances language learning and reduces anxiety

Cultural Expressions of Emotion: "Cultural Script" for emotion Different culture conceptualize and express emotions differently

Multilingualism and Emotion: Emotions differ across languages Learning languages in emotional context increase memory

Identity

Narrative Identity Development: Life story of memories Responsive listening helps speaker build a cohesive sense of self

Identity Texts: Creative works that reaffirm students' identities Multimodal, multilingual, positive, self-agentive representations

Counter Storytelling: Challenging majoritarian perspectives by telling stories that confront injustice and represent experiences outside of mainstream deficit views

Implementation Framework

1. Physical Warm Ups
2. Vocal Warm Ups
3. Theatre Games
4. Process Drama
5. Identity Text Creation
6. Scripted Drama
7. Community Action Theatre

Hong Kong, Canada by Tara Goldstein

A fictionalized performed ethnography

Based on fieldwork done in a Canadian high school with a large population of immigrant students from Hong Kong

Some of the text is verbatim from interviews

Written for use as a tool in anti-racist teacher education

1. Everyone participates to the best of their ability
2. Teach students to be supportive
3. Start with low risk activities

Physical Warm Ups

Stretches: Move your body to loosen up whatever feels tight.

Physicalizing Words: Listen to the word. Think of an action to represent or embody that word. Perform the action when the teacher repeats the word.

Tableaus: In a group, use your bodies to create a physical representation of the word that you are given.

Vocal Warm Ups

Vowels and Consonants: Listen and repeat the sounds. Try to pronounce them clearly, exaggerating the lip movements.

Pitch, Volume and Speed Counts: Count from one to five, increasing the pitch, increasing the volume or decreasing the speed as you say each number.

Emotion Walk: Walk around the room repeating the sentence *"But Toronto is no longer just an English speaking city."* Change your voice and movement to match the emotion.

Choose a number from 1-5.

Theatre Games

Status Game: Choose a number from 1-5. One represents the lowest social status and five is the highest. Think about how that person would move through society, and walk around the room in that way. Notice how others are walking and try to group yourself with others you think share the same number.

Feeling Echoes: Listen to the text. Use your body to show the emotions that you think the text evokes. It's ok if your interpretation is different than the other students.

Process Drama

Sound Tracking: Imagine the sounds of a high school hallway. Working together with the whole group, add sounds one at a time until everyone is making a sound to contribute to the soundscape.

Conscience Alley: Make two lines facing each other. One student shares a dilemma that a character in the play is facing. The other students give the character advice about the problem as they walk down the center of the alley.

Scripted Drama

Forum Theatre: In your group, assign the roles from the scene. Read/perform the scene for the rest of your group. The group members in the audience think about how the characters could behave differently to lead to a better outcome of the scene. Audience members volunteer to take the role of one of the characters and improvise a new ending to the scene. Repeat with different people trying different solutions to improve the outcome.

Identity Text Creation

1. Choose a moment
2. Create a storyboard
3. Rehearse the scene
4. Perform for the class

Community Action Theatre

1. Choose an issue facing the community
2. Analyze the root causes
3. Choose the setting and characters
4. Develop the story
5. Create the script
6. Rehearse the play
7. Perform for an audience
8. Discuss the play with the audience

References

Albalawi, B. R. (2014). Effectiveness of teaching English subject using drama on the development of students' critical thinking. IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education, 4(6), 54-63.

Al-Mahrooqi, R. & Tabakow, M. L. (2013). Drama in Oman to improve English proficiency among English major college students. Conference of the International Journal of Arts & Sciences, 6(4), 303-319.

Belliveau, G. & Kim, W. (2013). Drama in L2 learning: A research synthesis. Scenario, 7(2), 7-27.

Dicks, J. E. & LeBlanc, B. (2009). Using drama for learning to foster positive attitudes and increase motivation: Global simulation in French second language classes. Journal for Learning through the Arts, 5(1).

Galante, A. & Thomson, R. I. (2016). The effectiveness of drama as an instructional approach for the development of second language oral fluency, comprehensibility, and accentedness. TESOL Quarterly, 51(1), 115–142.

References

Greenfader, C. M., Brouillette, L. & Farkas, G. (2014). Effect of a performing arts program on the oral language skills of young English learners. Reading Research Quarterly, 50(2), 185-203.

Goldstein, T. (2000). Hong Kong, Canada: Performed ethnography for anti-racist teacher education. Teaching Education 11(3), 311-326. https://doi.org/10.1080/713698979

Goldstein, T. (2003). Hong Kong, Canada. In Teaching and Learning in a Multilingual School: Choices, Risks and Dilemmas. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Hays, P. A. (1996). Addressing the complexities of culture and gender in counseling. Journal of Counseling & Development, 74(4), 332-338.

Kao, S., Carkin, G. & Hsu, L. (2011). Questioning techniques for promoting language learning with students of limited L2 oral proficiency in a drama-oriented language classroom. Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance, 16(4), 489-515.

References

Lizasoain, A. & Ortiz de Zárate, A. (2009). Efficiency and effectiveness of drama techniques in the English classroom. Paper presented at the International Meeting of the Association of Youth Linguists, Barcelona, Spain.

McMaster, J. C. (1998). "Doing" literature: Using drama to built literacy. The Reading Teacher, 51(7), 574-584.

Miccoli, L. (2003). English through drama for oral skills development. ELT Journal, 57(2), 122-129.

Murray, B., Salas, S. and Ni Thoghdha, M. (2015). Applied theatre, adolescent English learners, and the performance of literacy. English Teaching Forum, 53(3), 2-11.

Ng, P. & Boucher-Yip, E. (2010). Readers theater: Improving oral proficiency in a Japanese university EFL course. ELT World Online, 2, 1-18.

O'Gara, P. (2008). To be or have not been: Learning language tenses through drama. Issues In Educational Research, 18(2).

References

Ryan-Schuetz, C. & Colangelo, L. M. (2004). Full-scale theatre production and foreign language learning. Foreign Language Annals, (37)3, 374-385.

Thirsk, J. & Solak, H. G. (2012). Vocal clarity through drama strategy. Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences, 46(2012), 343 – 346.

Werner, R. (2017). Drama for Social Justice: Embodying Identity and Emotion in ELT. Brattleboro, VT: SIT Graduate Institute. http://digitalcollections.sit.edu/ipp_collection/719/

Werner, R. (2017). Girls' Voices in Community Action Theatre in Tanzania. Continuum: The Journal of African Diaspora Drama, Theatre and Performance, 3(2). http://continuumjournal.org/index.php/102-volumes/issues/vol-3-no-2/3-2-articles/142-girls-voices-in-community-action-theatre-in-tanzania

Drama for Social Justice:
Embodying Identity and Emotion in ELT

—

Riah.Werner@gmail.com

http://digitalcollections.sit.edu/ipp_collection/719/