

Quick Arts Based Activities to Enliven Your Classes

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**Do you use arts-based
activities in your
classes?**

Benefits of Arts-Based ELT

- Creativity
- Motivation, engagement and fun
- Multimodality
- Multiple Intelligences
- Lowers the affective filter
- Personal expression
- Positive classroom atmosphere

Challenges of Arts-Based ELT

- Not part of the curriculum
- Takes time
- Lack of materials
- Lack of training
- Not valued by administrators
- Not seen as serious learning

Specific Art Forms in ELT

Visual Arts

- Drawing
- Photography
- Painting
- Collage
- Sculpture

Research on Visual Arts in TESOL

- Drawing helps students calm their emotions, increase concentration and cope with difficulties (Rajuan & Gidoni, 2014)
- Units centered on specific works of art can be designed to fulfil curricular mandates and teach academic language (Choi, 2017)
- Using pictures first helps students communicate complex, detailed thoughts in their writing, with richer art leading to richer text (Olshansky, 2018)

Performing Arts

- Music
- Drama
- Puppetry
- Dance
- Filmmaking

Research on Performing Arts in TESOL

- Music helps students learn vocabulary (Davis & Fan, 2016) and singing improves pronunciation (Izzah & Sukrisno, 2017)
- Participating in process drama develops students' literacy skills and deepens their connections to literature (Murray, Salas & Ni Thoghdha, 2015)
- Integrating vocalization and dance helps speak more fluently (Bell, 1999)

Literary Arts

- Creative writing
- Poetry
- Storytelling
- Comics
- Literature

Research on Literary Arts in TESOL

- Writing poetry in response to art can increase intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy (Gulla, 2015)
- L2 creative writing increases metacognition and deepens understandings of connotation and style (Hancı - Azizoglu, 2018)
- Imitating creative writing models increases confidence and the complexity of student writing (Choi & Wong, 2018)

Arts Education and Multidisciplinary Arts

Arts integration is an approach to teaching in which students demonstrate understanding through an art form.

Students engage in a creative process which connects an art form and another subject area and meets evolving objectives in both.

(Kennedy Center)

Aesthetic education is the encouragement of the formation of new connections, patterns, and perceptions through the appreciation of and reflection on meaningful experiences with the arts.

(Greene, 2001, cited in Murphy, 2014)

Research on Multidisciplinary Arts in TESOL

- Arts can increase motivation, self esteem and cooperative learning (Guerrero, 2017)
- Integrating art into the curriculum leads to higher test scores (Walter, 2006) and develops students' cognitive, linguistic and cultural skills (Spina, 2006)
- Creating multimodal identity texts can transform students' perceptions of their identities and academic capabilities (Cummins, Hu, Markus & Montero, 2015)

**Students' experience
with the arts is more
important than the
quality of their artwork**

(Seidel, Tishman, Winner, Hetland & Palmer, 2009)

3 Quick Arts Based Activities

10 minutes or less
No arts expertise needed

1. Partner drawing
2. Physical drama
3. Personalized songs



Activity 1: Partner drawing

1. Draw a picture.
2. In pairs, describe your picture without showing it to your partner. Draw what your partner describes.
3. Compare pictures and switch roles.

Activity 2: Physical drama

1. Use your body to show the meaning of each word. You can move or be still.
2. In groups, create tableaux (still images) to show words or scenes.
3. Add a repetitive movement to your group's tableau.
4. Add a sound to accompany the movement.

Activity 3: Personalized songs

1. Listen to the song and do the gestures.
2. Sing the song and do the gestures.
3. Think of new words and gestures to create your own verse of the song.

If You're Happy and You Know It

If you're _____ and you know it,

_____.

If you're _____ and you know it,

_____.

If you're _____ and you know it,

then your face will surely show it.

If you're _____ and you know it,

_____.

Happy--smile wide

Sad--wipe your tears

Angry--stomp your feet

Scared--hide your face

(Werner, 2018)

Adding Arts Activities to Your Classes

Strategies for Arts-Based ELT

- Art first, language second
- Have clear language objectives and connect the art activities to the content you teach
- Start simple (drawing, songs, role plays)
- Include both creating and consuming art
- Use multiple art forms
- Explain why you are using the arts

Thank you!

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