
BUSD
Arts for All
presents...
Teaching
As A
Performing Art
K-5 Professional Development
Theatre Arts in the Classroom
Tuesday, October 29, 2013
2:30 pm – 4:00 pm
Kindergarten
Presented by
Khanisha Foster .....24th Street Theatre
Patty Dagata... Washington Elementary
Peggy Flynn.....BUSD VAPA Coordinator

Actor's Tools



An actor's tools are unusual among artists. Whereas a painter's tools are his watercolors, brushes, and paper, and a pianist's tool is her instrument, an actor has no tools but him or herself. An actor uses *voice, body, and mind/spirit* to create a character. Like the pianist or other performing artists, the actor is usually an *interpretive artist*, meaning that the actor is part of an interpretation of a primary artist's work -- in this case the primary artist is the playwright. Because an actor is usually interpreting a role written by someone else, the play text is also a tool for character creation.

Developmental Stages
THEATRE
Kindergarten – Grade One

Children in kindergarten and first grade are still in Piaget's Pre-operational Stage (2-7 Years). They have started to use verbal and visual symbols – language and images - to represent objects. A pre-operational child is highly literal in comprehension. He/she still learns from concrete evidence, while older children and adults can think in abstractions. The pre-operational child is unaware of another person's perspective. He/she exhibits "omnipotent," egocentric thought and language.

Children in the pre-operational stage are still learning to distinguish fantasy from reality and are highly engaged in fantasy play. They can be observed organizing comprehension of their environment through role-playing.

In instruction, children in the Pre-operational stage need tasks broken down into clear, step by step directions.

Performance concerns: Spotlight anxiety, or stage fright, can be traumatic for young children and can cause lasting damage. *Even when they volunteer*, students at this age should not be asked to perform spontaneously in front of the class or an audience. Rehearsed students should not perform unless they are well prepared. Performances at this age should be in intimate, safe spaces, for small audiences only.

Kindergarten skills to be built through dramatic play:

- Responding actively to stories
- Understanding the difference between fantasy and reality
- Sequencing
- Moving from parallel play to belonging to/interacting with a group
- Pretending in fantasy play
- Imitating
- Performing call and response activity
- Acquiring vocabulary
- Selecting and using simple props
- Watching live theatre respectively

Suggested Theatre Components:

- Sensory journeys
- Storytelling with participation
- Short improvisations with an adult
- Simple pantomime activities
- Statues
- Walkabouts

Discovering, reflecting, assessing:

Talking about what you're doing, thinking, and feeling with appropriate language

Journaling with pictures

First grade skills to be built through drama activities:

Learning rules for games
Assigning roles
Playing language and word games
Listening to stories
Identifying self as a learning person
Observing outside themselves
Distinguishing between a character on stage and a person performing the role (actor)
Predicting and inferring from stories
Improving gross motor skills

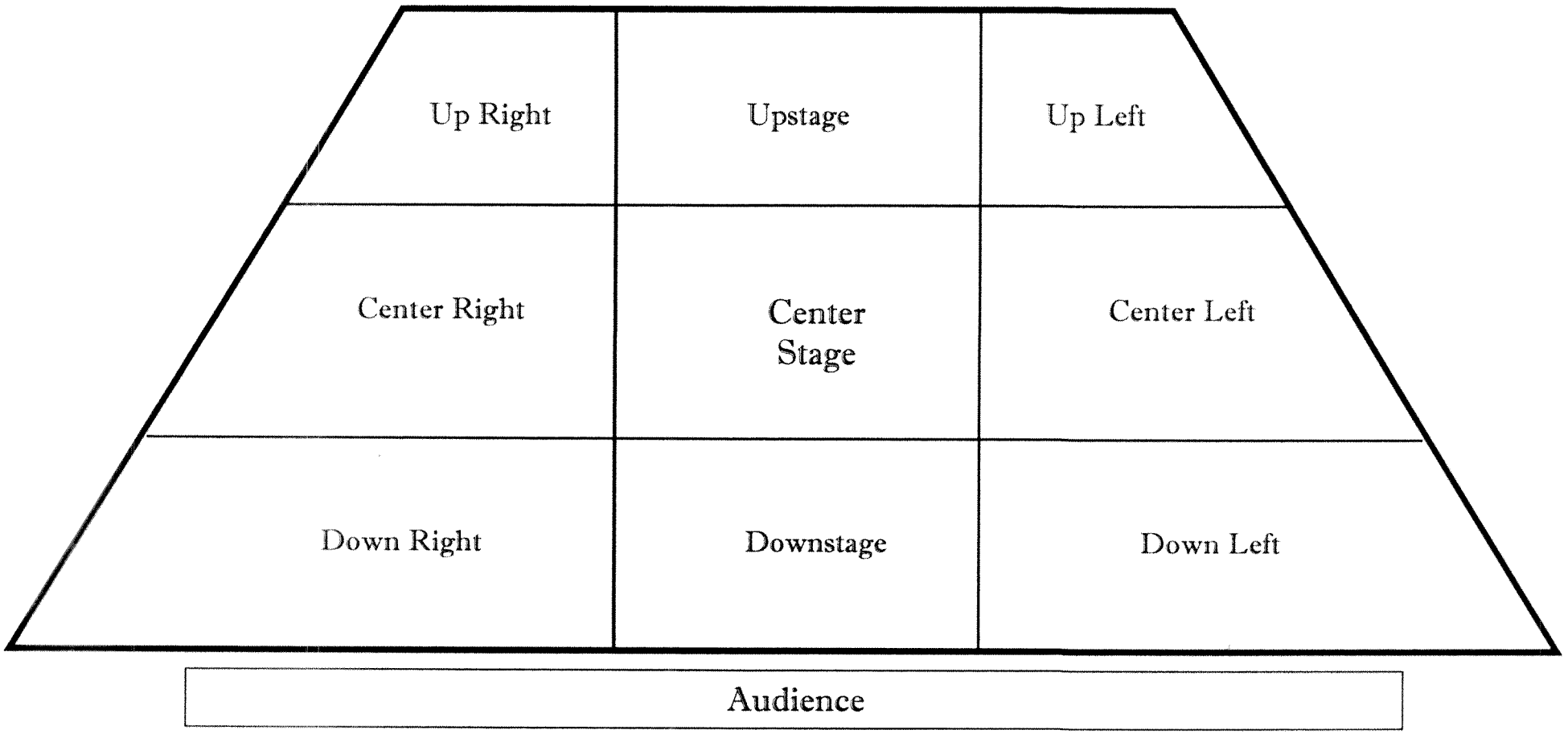
Suggested Theatre Components:

Sensory journeys with conflicts and problems
Retelling/dramatizing stories
Short improvisations with classmates
Pantomime activities with beginning, middle, end
Statues with feelings
Walkabouts with detail
Selecting and using simple props and costume pieces
Watching live theatre and discussing it

Discovering, reflecting, assessing:

Interviewing about what you're doing, thinking, and feeling with appropriate language

Documenting
Journaling with pictures and words



Stage Diagram for a Proscenium Stage

The first stages were built on a slant (a *raked stage*), with the back of the stage rising up and away from the audience. The audience stood or sat on flat ground. With the stage slanted, actors furthest away from the audience could be seen because they were "upstage". The actors closest to the audience were "downstage" based on the slant. The directions of left and right are based on the actors' left and right—this makes it easier for the director to direct the actor!

Tipsheets

Five Easy Drama Games for the Early Elementary Classroom

Interested in fostering creativity in the classroom but lack the space or resources for an elaborate theater production?

Overview

Drama games tap into students' imagination and can be conducted in any classroom for a variety of purposes—in warm-ups or closures, team-building activities, or to accompany and enhance a lesson plan.

1. Different Voices, Different Occasions

An invaluable skill for young students is figuring out how to adapt their voice to a particular situation and place—whether on the playground, in the classroom, or talking to a friend on the bus. The following exercise teaches students how to modulate their voice while also teaching voice projection:

First create an open space in your classroom and have students sit in a circle. Each student selects one index card from a container. On the card, a location (i.e., couch, desk, gym, bus, park) and a person (i.e., friend, teacher, guardian) are provided. Pick a student to select one stuffed animal or toy from a pile you gathered before class, then place it anywhere in the circle. Invite the student to speak to the object as if it were the person listed on the index card in the appropriate tone of voice for the given location. After the student speaks, the rest of the class guesses the location of the conversation and whom the doll or toy represents. Continue until every student has a chance to speak.

2. Special Me: A Memorization Game

A good memory is essential on the theater stage and in the real world. Help students exercise their memorization muscles while also building self-esteem and a sense of identity. The following game will also help you gain insight into students' personalities.

With the class sitting in a circle, have each student share something he/she is proud of, thankful for, or happy about. Moving clockwise, each student should take turns completing the sentence, "I am _____and I am special because_____." Remind students First Name Reason that they don't have to pick an object that is special; they could be special because of an experience or feeling. After each student shares his/her sentence, the person sitting to the left must state why the person who just spoke is special before sharing his/her own unique sentence.

3. Rhythm Again and Again

Another great memory game highlights rhythm and repetition. In addition to improving students' memory retention, the following game helps students develop an understanding of sequence and improves their ability to focus.

While sitting on the floor or at their desks, students take turns making a two-beat sound with their feet, hands, or mouth. Start off the first round by clapping your hands twice. The person to your right makes a sound of his/her choosing, such as finger-snapping twice, then repeats the sound you made. The next person makes a new two-beat sound, then repeats the others. The creation and recollection of sounds continues around the room while keeping a steady beat. If a student is stumped, give out a clue then continue. Depending on the grade level, you may choose to limit how many sounds in a row should be made in each round. At the end of each round, invite the next student to begin a new sequence of sounds.

After everyone has participated, have the students perform—one by one—only the sound they chose. Discuss the rhythm and musicality of the sounds the class performed

4. Moving Vocabulary

Actors must learn to move their bodies as well as their voices to portray a character. Teach students how to choreograph a series of movements, reinforce new vocabulary, and introduce tempo and rhythm to students—all in one activity.

Before class, pick a variety of verbs—some that students are already familiar with and some that they are learning (e.g., jump, stumble, twist, bounce, skate, fly, glide, skip). Write each word on individual note cards and put all cards in one container. Have students form a circle and invite each to pick a note card. While music is playing, students enter the circle, one by one, and demonstrate their movement. You will find that students keep time to the music as they are demonstrating. Next, break the class into groups of 4 or 5 and have them put their movements together into a dance. Each person must incorporate his or her movement once into the group dance. The group decides the order of the movements and must figure out a way to smoothly transition from one movement to the next. Have each group perform their dance for the rest of the class, making sure that the movements accompany the tempo of the music. You may choose to repeat this activity, having each person incorporate his or her movement twice into the group dance.

5. Charades: A Character Study

Drama and language arts go hand in hand. Students can study characters in a nursery rhyme or story by acting out and guessing clues about a character's main traits. Not only are students learning how to recognize the details that make individuals unique, but they are also developing important presentation skills.

Begin by explaining the concept of charades: One person uses gestures, movement, and facial expressions to get the class to guess a predetermined word—without talking. As the audience throws out guesses, the actor nods yes if the guess is getting close or correct. Before class, pick 1-4 characters from a story or nursery rhyme and write the character's traits or characteristics on large note cards. Have students study the cards and pick one trait (or a combination of traits) that best exemplifies the character they are portraying. Invite students to individually act out a trait (or traits) with movement, without speaking. You can choose to have the class guess the character or the trait.

By enlivening your classroom with these drama games, your students will develop important life skills, enhance oral and communication skills, gain confidence, and have fun while learning.

CREDITS
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Theatre Games

Mirror – 2 people face each other. One is the leader the other the follower. Slowly moving while looking into each others eyes the leader guides the follower – the follower mirrors the movements of the leader. Then switch. Theme: What do we see when we look in the 'mirror'? Each other! We have so much in common.

Chair exercise – Imagine the chair as a living breathing thing; 'it's alive but doesn't move. It retains all of it's 'chair' qualities. Have someone sit behind it and 'speak' for it. The conflict is that people have bullied, abused or taken it for granted. This is a simple scene of a chair persuading a 'sitter' to change their behavior. Theme: Exploring compassion through puppetry.

Opposites – Whatever the teacher says, the student does the opposite. For example:

Teacher says:

"Sit" = Students stand
"Yell" = Students whisper
"Act old" = Students act very young

Simple conflict is the central fact of good storytelling. Two characters that have opposite points of view about something is the beginning of scene work. Theme: How conflicts arise out of simple opposite points of view about something.

Building Story Through Cues – Tell student their cue (when its their turn to do something) Be specific. For example:

Teacher says:

"When I clap Hugo stands up. When Hugo stands up, Martha taps Felix on the shoulder."

Language can be added and more complex actions can be built. Magicians rely on misdirection, something that distracts our attention, to give the appearance of an unexplainable occurrence. The 'misdirection' in building a story through cues is while the students are concentrating and memorizing their cues and the timing, they lose inhibitions about performing a scene. They focus so much on when their cue is coming and what to do when it does that they don't notice that they have created an ensemble scene. Theme: It takes a team.

Yes And

Synonyms

None

Introduction

This exercise emphasises over accepting and supporting other players on stage. Two people up.

Description

In Yes And the players are constantly saying, 'yes and'. The mechanism goes something like this. One player may start off with, "Your coat is so lovely." The response of the other player could be, "YES AND I made it for you." The other player responds, "YES AND I have a thousand dollars for it." "YES AND I am going to use that money to make a hundred more coats for you." The players must always have the 'yes and' at the beginning of their sentence. This seems contrived and it is. It is remarkable how much easier it is to notice players that insist on controlling the scene. They cannot bring themselves to accept the offer. The most common response is, "yes and but." These scenes have a tendency to accelerate into the stratosphere.

Gimmicks

None

Variations

There is a version called, 'yes but'

Credits

None

Yes Let's

Synonyms

None

Introduction

This warm-up focuses on accepting offers and getting silly. Start milling about the room.

Description

Someone will loudly suggest an activity for all the group to mime. Everyone simultaneously yells 'yes lets', and starts the do the activity. Once the activity has been mimed for a while another one is yelled out and the group responds with 'yes lets' and starts the activity. For example, if someone calls out let's all dig holes. The group responds with "yes let's all dig holes", and every manner of hole digging mime will begin (complete with sound effects). The someone will suggest a new activity and the cycle continues.

Gimmicks

Someone yells out 'let's finish this exercise', or 'let's all sit down.'

Variations

None

Credits

None

Theatre Games for Young Children

BEAN BAG WARM UP

Level: Primary and up
Grades: K and up | **Age**: 5 and up | **Written by**: Connor Snyder
[Connor is a professional actress and producer (M*A*S*H & HBO)]

Summary:

This drama exercise demonstrates to the children how important it is to project their voices.

What You Need:

- three bean bags

What You Do:

Place three bean bags in front of a row of children. One about 10 feet away from them - the second about 20 feet away, the third about 35-40 feet away (this can obviously be changed to suit the physical environment of the class).

1. Ask each child to look directly at the first bean bag, say their name and the name of their favorite animal.
2. Instruct him to say the exact same things to the second bean bag.
3. Would he speak with the same volume? Of course not - the "person" is further away.
4. When asked to address the third bean bag, he obviously should be projecting his voice as loud as he can.
5. After all the class has addressed the bean bags, let them know they were really acting in a play just then - reaching the first three rows, the middle rows, and the back rows of the theatre!

Drama from Picture Books

I often use children's picture books as lesson starters in my classroom. Below are some suggestions, based on the kind of approaches I have taken, for how you can turn a picture book into a Creative Drama lesson. There is also a link to a list of picture books I have found especially well-suited to Drama, each with a short explanation of how I have used it.

Theatre Games for Young Children

Simple Story Dramatization

This is the most simple and straightforward approach, but it often does not yield a simple result. After reading a story to the class, you can have them act out the story. This requires both careful planning and flexibility. With older kids, I use the blackboard (see **Group Playwriting Project**) but with very young children this is counterproductive. Still, you have to plan who will play each character, and which parts of the story to act out. Usually I will not go back and fix things, but simply forge ahead until the end is reached. As I said, while this is the easiest approach to think up, it is not so easy to do. Usually I prefer to take a more carefully structured approach, like one of the ones below.

Works best with Kindergarten or elementary.

Problem-Solving Exercise

Before reading the story, I tell my students that we will be acting out some of the scenes from the story afterwards. In order to do this safely, following the classroom rules, we may have to be pretty creative. I tell my students to be thinking, while listening to the story, about what some of the problems might be when we try to act out the story. I choose for this exercise a story with a lot of physicality, and some knotty problems. *The Story of Ferdinand* (see **Useful Picture Books**) is great because it has a lot of "violence"--bulls butting their heads together, etc.--and we have a rule in my younger classes that we don't touch each other and we are always careful. Once the story is finished, we discuss the problems we will have to solve before acting out the most exciting scenes. Usually I have every child act out the scenes in unison rather than trying to "cast" the story. (In the case of Ferdinand, we might decide to act out the head-butting in "super slow-motion," which my students love, or to use our own two hands to represent two bulls crashing into each other. Whatever the problems--and they need not be safety-related--the class brainstorms solutions, and then tries them out.

Works best with elementary.

Soundtrack

I read the story, showing the pictures, fairly quickly, stopping at every picture if the book is short or at the most exciting ones if it is longer. When we stop at a picture, I ask my

students to imagine what all the sounds we might hear are in the depicted scene. I try to coach them to really get in-depth. In a picture of a cow in a farmyard there are lots of things besides "moos." Chickens, a rusty weather-vane, boots in mud, the farm dog, the cow's bell, a creaking gate, birds overhead, all make a complete soundtrack. We practice making the sounds while watching me "conduct"--indicating louder or softer, and eventually cutting the sound off like an orchestra conductor. We do this with each picture. Then we return to the beginning of the book and I read it again, but this time the sounds happen automatically when each picture is revealed. (I still ordinarily do the "cut-off" with younger students, but older ones cut off on their own when the page is turned.) This results in a smooth telling of the story with a running soundtrack.

Works best with Kindergarten and lower elementary.

Narrative Pantomime

This is a simple activity that can be done with any story, whether from a book or not, but I put it here because a book is a good source for a story. At its simplest, it works like this: Each person finds his own personal space in the room. There will be no interaction between the children--each is in his own story. As the teacher reads or tells a simple story, each person, on his own, "acts it out." Ordinarily there would be no sound, since that would make it hard to hear the story, and there are no props of costumes. Each student simply goes through the physical movements of protagonist of the story, and concentrates on the five senses--on really "experiencing" the character's adventures.

Works best with elementary.

Instant Illustrations

Read a book to the class but don't show them the pictures. Explain to them that while the illustrator has one idea about how the scenes in the story might look, there are many possible ideas. Periodically--once per page if the book is short, less frequently for a longer book--stop and have the students create the illustration, using their bodies in frozen tableau. This can be more or less involved, depending on the age of the children. With young ones I just have each student make his own illustration, but sometimes with older children I expect them to work together to create one definitive picture. (Sometimes it works better to read the whole story through first, then go back and make the illustrations--it just depends on the complexity of the story.) I like this activity because it will work with literally any book, and need no preparation or planning, so it is a good fallback if whatever I have planned is impossible for any reason--if I've planned a

lesson with music and left the tape home, for example. I can just grab up any book off the shelf and go.

Works best with lower elementary.

What's Up, Tiger Lily?

Woody Allen once made a movie by taking a Japanese B spy movie and dubbing it into English with an entirely different plot. This film is the inspiration for this activity. It can work with a familiar book or with one the students have never seen, although there are necessary differences in approach if the book is familiar. The idea is to create an original story that works with the illustrations of a picture book. This project takes several lessons.

Begin by showing the class the book, but not reading the words. (If the book is familiar, it is probably better to go ahead and read the words, so that the whole class is on the same page, but if it is unfamiliar to everyone, don't read the words.) Then go through it again, and brainstorm what might be happening on each page. It is not necessary to settle on one interpretation of each page--what is important is to stimulate a lot of ideas.

When you have gone through the whole book this way, it is usually time to end class for the day. If not, go on to another activity so that the ideas have a chance to ferment. Return to the book project next class.

Divide the class into small groups--four to six in a group seems to work best. If you have multiple copies of the book, give one to each group. If you own the books, obscure the words in some way, with tape or something. If not, though, there's no real harm in letting them see the words at this point. Each group must come up with a story and dramatize it, using whatever props and costume pieces you have available, or finding their own. I often do this activity with no props or costumes at all, beyond the desks, etc. in my classroom, but that's only because I really haven't put together a collection of costume pieces yet. (It's a project I keep meaning to get to.) That works, too. This might take all of one class period or more, but with younger children it will probably take less.

When the groups have had a chance to rehears their scenes (with the teacher, or course, side-coaching as needed, they share their stories with the class. Once the project is over, you can read the original story and discuss how it is similar and different.

Works best with upper elementary or older.

Simple Role Drama

Theatre Games for Young Children

Role Drama is a complex form which originated in Britain, in which students take on roles, either of their own creation or suggested by the structure of the activity, and then enter into the drama as thinking participants. It can be a little frightening for teachers because the outcome is not preordained, and because it frequently involves the teacher in role, but it is highly enriching. Students in Role Drama activities must make choices, must react and interact *in role*--making decisions based not on what they personally would do or what they think would make a funny story, but rather based on the real situation into which their characters are placed. There is a short discussion of Role Drama on my Definitions page and a good book on the subject in my Bibliography. This exercise is a very simple, one- or two-day Role Drama activity. It can be done with any number of books, but I'll use a specific example because it is the easiest way to describe the process. What follows is a description of a Role Drama lesson I use with Kindergarten, based on the book, *The Little Baby Snoogle Fleejur,* by (or all people) Jimmy and Amy Carter. (See **Useful Picture Books**.)

I begin by reading part of the book. I don't show the children the pictures. I even turn the dust jacket inside out so that there is no picture visible on the cover. In the story, Jeremy, a young crippled boy, is playing on the beach when some sort of sea monster is sighted in the water. In telling/reading the story I lay great stress on the fact that no one gets a very good look at the monster--if it is a monster--and that there are several different versions of what it might be. Then I stop and close the book.

I tell my students that we are now going to pretend that we are all local inhabitants of the town in which the story takes place. Each student may decide for himself who he is to be. Each of us has seen something in the water, or has seen some evidence of strange phenomena, but no one has gotten a clear look at any monster. We have become alarmed and called a town meeting. I will play the Mayor, and conduct the meeting. Each person will have to tell the group what he has seen and why it alarms him. When I turn around, I will have become the Mayor.

I then turn around and assume the role of Mayor. "I want to thank you all for coming. I understand there is a lot of concern about some odd things that have been happening, and some strange sights in the surf. Would someone like to tell me what he has seen?" I call on the students as they volunteer, and, still in role, interrogate them. All the while I am coaching them to flesh out their characters with as much detail as possible. "Excuse me, sir, but before you go on, would you mind identifying yourself? Who are you and what do you do for a living? Where do you live? All right, now what is your concern?" I try to keep the discussion moving logically, while at the same time giving everyone a chance to speak. "My, that is worrying. Has anyone else seen something like this? Has anyone a suggestion about what it might mean?" We continue until everyone who wants to has had a chance to participate actively.

To continue the activity, and bring in some other kinds of activities, I may say, "Now, ladies and gentlemen, there is a reporter here from the Daily News program, and he wants to interview some of you. Would that be all right? When I turn around, I will be the reporter." Then as the reporter I might interview some students briefly. (Something I

do that seems to entertain my students no end is to constantly interact, irritably, with an invisible cameraman named Bob, who seems unable to do anything right. But there is no real necessity for acting fluency here--it shouldn't scare a teacher away from this type of activity.)

As the reporter I sometimes announce that we've been trying unsuccessfully to get video of the creature. "Since most of you have seen it, I wonder if you would mind drawing some pictures of it for us?" This way we bring another kind of creativity into play.

At this point at least on day's lesson has been used up, often two. Next we go back to the story and read further, to a part in which the monster turns out to be friendly. (Or to the end.) Then we can jump from there into an activity in which we create the monster using our bodies, either individually or in groups. (See Sculpture Gallery.) Or we can act out, as in Simple Story Dramatization above, the ending of the story. If I have stopped before the end we might try to finish the story in several different ways (as in the film, Clue). I usually don't, with Kindergarten, because of time, but you might have another town meeting, at which Jeremy tries to persuade the terrified townspeople not to destroy the harmless Snoogle Fleejur. Or you could all become Snoogle Fleejurs and try to decide what to do about the threat from the townspeople, or what to do with the member of your species who has brought on the trouble by showing himself to humans. There is literally no limit to the directions this lesson could go.

The point of Role Drama is to let the story suggests all sorts of different related activities, so each story will necessarily produce different activities. But I hope this description will help you to see how you might approach a story and create Role Drama.

Works with any age, but adjustments must be made to the level of sophistication.

Seasons and Weather

I use this lesson with my first-graders when they are studying Weather. It is a way to physicalize some of the ideas they are learning about. But it also makes a strong improvisation game for older students, so I use it-with, naturally, some changes in sophistication-with my adolescent acting students.

This lesson plan is written in the form of a narrative-a description of what happens in class when I teach the lesson.

First Step: Thinking about it.

I begin by asking the students to think about the four seasons.

What are some of the activities you do most in each season? (Going to school, playing football, raking leaves, etc. in the Fall; swimming, going to camp, watching television, etc., in Summer; playing Little League,

planting a garden, etc., in Spring; shoveling, skiing, playing hockey, etc., in Winter.)

What kinds of weather do we tend to have in each season? (Sunshine, thunderstorms, heat in Summer, fog, hurricanes, cool in Fall, snow, sleet, icy winds in Winter, friendly rain, warm in Spring.)

Second Step: Acting it out.

Next I ask the students to imagine if is Fall (for instance). Think of an essentially Fall activity and begin to act it out. When I call out, "weather!" some kind of typical Fall weather will take place. Each student chooses for herself or himself which kind of weather it happens. When I call out, "weather!" everyone must react appropriately to whatever weather they are imagining.

We repeat this with each season. Sometimes I'll call out "weather!" several times for each season.

In my side-coaching I put a lot of stress on the senses. What does the weather sound like? Feel like? Does it have a smell? A taste? What do you see?

As a variation, particularly when I'm working with older students and my primary goal is improvisation training, rather than learning about the weather, I will call out a particular kind of weather, to which the students must instantly react. This ensures that the weather is unexpected, and the response to it unplanned.

Thanksgiving Day Feast

I invented this game on the spur of the moment last Thanksgiving when a scheduling change obliged me to teach a Kindergarten class for which I was not prepared. It combines thinking and learning about the way the Pilgrims might have lived with exploring the senses. Obviously it works best around Thanksgiving.

Discussion

When was the first Thanksgiving? Who celebrated it?

What sorts of things do you eat at Thanksgiving?

What sorts of things do you suppose the Pilgrims ate at their feast? (Corn, Venison, Fish, Bread, Turkey, Squash, etc.)

Theatre Games for Young Children

Where did they get it? Did they go to the store and buy a turkey? (No, they shot it.)

Did they go to the bakery and get some bread? (No, they baked it from flour they ground themselves.)

Did they get corn out of a can? (No, they grew it.)

Did they get fish from the freezer? (No, they caught them.)

Preparation

In a few minutes we are going to pretend we're Pilgrims. We're going to make, and then eat, the first Thanksgiving Feast. But first, let's practice pretending in a new way. We're going to have to pretend to **feel** things, and even to **taste** things. That's not so easy. Let's start with a lemon. Everyone pretend you have a lemon in your hand. Feel its shape. Feel its weight. Toss it up and down a few times. Take your finger and gently feel the bumpy surface. Feel the pointy end. Okay, here goes. Take a big bite. Wow! Look at how your classmates' faces are all squeezed up! You all really can taste that lemon!

How about ice cream? Let's take a bowl of your favorite flavor. Feel how cold the bowl feels in your hands. Take a spoon and take a big bite. Taste the sweetness. Feel it as it melts. Don't take too big a bite or you'll get a brain freeze! Don't you hate that?

Now let's try something hot--say, hot cocoa. Feel the heat of the mug as it warms your hands. Feel the steam in your face. Carefully take a small sip--be sure it's not too hot!

What about lifting something heavy? Let's pretend there's a suitcase here, and it is full of lead. See if you can lift it. Try hard! Wow, are you strong!

Okay, I think we're ready to start our game. Be sure to listen closely and do just what I say, so that we can all stay together and have a great feast.

The Feast

This is just a simple narrative pantomime. I've written it out in the form of a monologue, but there is no reason to slavishly adhere to it. This is just an example of what I say when I teach this lesson. I've divided it into specific events, but you might choose other events, and use some, all, or none or these. I only have a few here because my lessons with the Kindergarten are only half an hour long. This is just an example of what you could do.

Spring Planting

Let's pretend it is springtime. We need to start now if we're going to have anything to eat in the fall!

Theatre Games for Young Children

Let's plant some corn. The Indians showed us how, remember? First we dig a lot of small holes. Hey! Be careful where you're throwing that dirt! Make sure the holes are nice and deep. Can you feel how firm the soil is?
Who's got the corn? Take your bag of dried corn kernels and drop a small handful into each hole. Be sure not to miss any! Feel what the corn kernels feel like in your hand. What does it feel like to put your hand in the bag and feel them all?

Oops! Now we need some fish! Fish? Of course. Let's pretend we have some right over here. We caught them yesterday. Pick one up. Feel how slippery and scaly it is. Bring a bunch of them over to the holes. Don't drop them! It's hard to carry a lot of slippery fish! We should have used a bucket. Dump them down by the holes.

Use your shovel to cut each one in half. Oooh, gross! Let's not touch them with our hands again!

Now drop half a fish in each hole. That will help to fertilize the corn. Wow, I'm glad that's over.

Now let's fill the holes in with dirt. Gently! Tap it down with your toe to make it firm.

We need some water. Let's pretend the well is over here. Get a bucket. Now we turn the crank and up comes the pail full of water. Pour it into your bucket. Wait until everyone has some! Now let's carry it back to the cornfield. Ugh! It's heavy! Can you feel how heavy it is?

Now let's carefully pour the water over the freshly planted corn. We'll have to tend our cornfield all summer.

Fall Hunt

Of course, we'll have to plant some squash and pumpkins, and some wheat as well, but let's pretend we already did that. In fact, let's pretend it's fall already, and it's time to get ready for the feast.

Let's go hunting. We have some guns--muskets and blunderbusses--but let's take bows and arrows instead. We're hunting wild turkeys, and the Indians have shown us that their bows are more accurate than our noisy guns. Make sure to bring plenty of arrows!

We're walking into the woods now. Can you feel the underbrush as it touches your legs? Can you hear the sounds of the forest? Can you smell the rich, piney air?

Theatre Games for Young Children

Shhh! I think there's some turkeys up ahead! Get your bow ready! Feel the tension on the string. Set the arrow carefully. We have to be ready when they fly up into the air. Pull the string back. It's surprisingly hard to pull, isn't it?

There they go! Aim carefully and let the arrow go! Did you hear the sound it made as it left the bow?

You got one! Good shot! Let's go pick it up and carry it home.

Time to Eat

Now let's pretend it's time to eat. We must have hunted other things too, like deer, and we must have caught some fish. We must have cooked all day. But I think it would be more fun to EAT!

Take your plate and fill it up with all the good stuff there is here. Then bring it with you to your seat. Would someone say grace? (If you teach in a school where grace is a bad idea, just skip it, but I defend it on the basis of historical accuracy.) Okay--let's eat!

Be sure you really taste your food! Some of the things the Pilgrims ate might be new to you. What are they like? Do you like them? Be sure and try lots of different things!

For a spur-of-the-moment invention, this activity worked great the first time, and I now use it every Thanksgiving.

Sculpture Gallery

I learned this activity, with modifications, from Sharon Grady at the University of Texas. I use it with first, second and third grade classes and my Summer mixed groups. It helps students become comfortable with their bodies, learn to express ideas and emotions kinesthetically, and learn to trust each other. It gives every child a chance to shine and be the star in two very different ways. My students also really enjoy it.

First Part: Creating the Sculptures

Divide the class into pairs. In each pair, one student is the "sculptor" and one the "clay."

The sculptor "sculpts" his or her partner's body into a statue of his or her choosing. The sculptor may do this by physically moving the partner's body into position, or by showing the "clay" how to stand. The sculptor pays close attention to even small details like facial expression or the position of a finger. When the "sculpture" is finished, she or he freezes. (It

the position is difficult or impossible to hold, the "sculpture" may memorized it and then relax until her or his turn in the "tour" arrives.

Second Part: Gallery Tour

Once all of the artists have finished their masterpieces, I call them together in the center of the room. The "sculptures" remain in place around the room. In role as a museum guide, I conduct a tour of the "gallery." When we reach each work, the artist who made it steps forward and explains his or her work to the group. In this way we make a complete tour, giving each artist a chance to show off and describe his or her work. (Once a "sculpture" has been viewed, she or he may relax and join the group on the rest of the tour.

Once the "tour" is finished, the partners switch roles and the process is repeated.

In our discussions afterwards I always ask the students, "How many artists created each statue?" At first they usually answer, "one," but I coach them to see that the "clay" is an artist too, since each one is different, and no matter how carefully he tried, an artist could not make exactly the same statue with a different partner. Being human and not clay, the "sculpture" makes real contribution to the work of art. This is a good introduction to the relationship between playwright, director, and actor-the actor makes a real contribution even if she does exactly what the director says every time, just as even the most slavishly literal director makes a contribution in addition to that of the playwright.

The Benefits of Drama Education

Research reveals the positive impact of drama on a student's Physical, Emotional, Social, and Cognitive Development

- **Self-Confidence:** Taking risks in class and performing for an audience teach students to trust their ideas and abilities. The confidence gained in drama applies to school, career, and life.
- **Imagination:** Making creative choices, thinking of new ideas, and interpreting familiar material in new ways are essential to drama. Einstein said, "Imagination is more important than knowledge."
- **Empathy:** Acting roles from different situations, time periods, and cultures promotes compassion and tolerance for others' feelings and viewpoints.
- **Cooperation/Collaboration:** Theatre combines the creative ideas and abilities of its participants. This cooperative process includes discussing, negotiating, rehearsing, and performing.
- **Concentration:** Playing, practicing, and performing develop a sustained focus of mind, body, and voice, which also helps in other school subjects and life.
- **Communication Skills:** Drama enhances verbal and nonverbal expression of ideas. It improves voice projection, articulation of words, fluency with language, and persuasive speech. Listening and observation skills develop by playing drama games, being an audience, rehearsing, and performing.
- **Problem Solving:** Students learn how to communicate the who, what, where, and why to the audience. Improvisation fosters quick-thinking solutions, which leads to greater adaptability in life.
- **Fun:** Drama brings play, humor, and laughter to learning; this improves motivation and reduces stress.
- **Emotional Outlet:** Pretend play and drama games allow students to express a range of emotions. Aggression and tension are released in a safe, controlled environment, reducing antisocial behaviors.
- **Relaxation:** Many drama activities reduce stress by releasing mental, physical, and emotional tension.
- **Self-Discipline:** The process of moving from ideas to actions to performances teaches the value of practice and perseverance. Drama games and creative movement improve self-control.
- **Trust:** The social interaction and risk taking in drama develop trust in self, others, and the process.
- **Physical Fitness:** Movement in drama improves flexibility, coordination, balance, and control.
- **Memory:** Rehearsing and performing words, movements, and cues strengthen this skill like a muscle.
- **Social Awareness:** Legends, myths, poems, stories, and plays used in drama teach students about social issues and conflicts from cultures, past and present, all over the world.
- **Aesthetic Appreciation:** Participating in and viewing theatre raise appreciation for the art form. It is important to raise a generation that understands, values, and supports theater's place in society.

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Using Drama and Movement to Enhance English Language Learners' Literacy Development

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Using Drama and Movement to Enhance English Language Learners' Literacy Development

> I believe in action and activity. The brain learns best and retains most when the organism is actively involved in exploring physical sites and materials and asking questions to which it actually craves answers. Merely passive experiences tend to attenuate and have little lasting impact. (Gardner, 1999, p. 82)

When drama and movement are integrated within the daily curriculum, engaging and numerous learning experiences transpire for early childhood learners (Chauhan, 2004; Royka, 2002). Besides being "fun" for most children, kinesthetic activities can help young learners, especially English language learners, develop decoding skills, fluency, vocabulary, syntactic knowledge, discourse knowledge, and metacognitive thinking (Sun, 2003). Teaching language skills through drama and movement gives children a context for listening and meaningful language production, provides opportunities for reading and writing development (Chauhan, 2004), and involves children in reading and writing as a holistic and meaningful communication process (McNamee, McLane, Cooper, & Kerwin, 1985). In addition to the development of gross and fine motor coordination skills, creative expression and thinking, social interaction, problem solving, cooperative play, rhythm, and rhyming skills can be enhanced.

Young children are often more receptive to any kind of drama activity since they are closer to the exploration stage of development (Royka, 2002) thus, early childhood teachers often use games, play, and drama activities in their daily classroom instruction.

Integrating drama and movement techniques into the early childhood classroom can be especially effective in the development of language proficiency for English language learners (ELLs). These kinesthetic, authentic experiences use language in an interactive context (O'Malley & Pierce,1996). Using the Total Physical Response (TPR) and the Language Experience Approach (LEA) are two techniques to facilitate learning through drama and movement and can be integrated across the curriculum.

Drama and Literacy in the Classroom

Dramatic Literature-Based Experiences and English Language Learners:

Facilitating dramatic literature-based experiences to support English Language Learners (ELLs) is vital. Peregoy and Boyle (2008) suggested that acting out stories and events is a highly motivating approach for students to process and to share information. Wright and her colleagues (2007) agreed and added that dramatizing stories is not only motivational but allows students to think in more sophisticated ways. Other benefits of story dramatization include introducing children to the process of writing, allowing for creative expression of ideas and feelings, providing opportunities to develop social skills, and allowing young children to work through ideas and experiences (Cooper, 1993; Paley 1990).

Opportunities for ELLs to develop reading fluency and a better understanding of syntactic knowledge through the reading and writing of stories are provided with the implementation of dramatic experiences in the early childhood classroom. Tompkins (2009) stated, "Listening is a key to language development because children learn English as they listen to the teacher and classmates talk and read aloud" (p. 223).

Additional benefits of using drama include increased motivation, reduced anxiety,

and enhanced language acquisition for ELLs (Richard-Amato, 1988). Some young learners, especially those in the Silent Stage of English language learning, may not be comfortable with drama and movement. Royka (2002) cautioned teachers of ELLs that students' comfort levels can depend on families' cultural values, the ability of the children, and varying social factors. Thus, it is important for teachers to provide a relaxing, non-threatening atmosphere when using this type of instruction. Giving sideline coaching support or providing puppets or masks may assist students in becoming more comfortable as they engage in learning experiences which include drama and movement (Isenberg & Jalongo, 2006). Since the benefits of dramatic literature-based experiences are significant, teachers are encouraged to provide appropriate support and guidance for these types of learning opportunities for ELLs.

Formal and Informal Drama. Drama can be informal or formal. Informal drama is where children create their own drama using props. Another variety of informal drama is dramatic story reenactments where children use puppets or act out stories they recreate (Sun, 2003). A third form of informal drama suggested by Peregoy and Boyle (2008) is to make props available for acting out stories that are read in the classroom. Kirmani (2007) acknowledged the importance of stocking dramatic play areas with clothing from other cultures like *saris* from India, *kimonos* from Asia, and *ponchos* from South America so children can try on the different pieces and the teacher can explain why, when, and where the articles of clothing are worn.

A more formal approach to drama involves students in improvisations based on situations for which they create dialogue. O'Malley and Pierce (1996) encouraged teachers to use situations or scenarios that relate to students' everyday lives for use with

improvisations. Regardless the specific type, informal or formal, Peregoy and Boyle (2008) stated, "Drama activities provide students with a variety of contextualized and scaffolded activities that gradually involve more participation and more oral language proficiency; they are also non-threatening and a lot of fun" (p. 128).

Vocabulary: Promoting vocabulary development is an important aspect of dramatic experiences. To reinforce and extend literature comprehension, teachers can read and write stories that contain new vocabulary words and have students act out the meanings of the words (Sun, 2003). Alber and Foil (2003) recommended creating a memorable event for children when introducing new vocabulary. Effective teachers provide engaging opportunities for children to physically move as they think about and comprehend new terminology.

Poetry: Dramatizing poetry is another effective method for teaching ELLs; however, selecting the right poem is essential. Poems that present mini-dramas or express strong emotions, attitudes, feelings, or opinions work best (Tomlinson, 1986). One poem that appeals to children is *The Crocodile's Toothache*, by Shel Silverstein (1974). This poem is a humorous dialogue between a crocodile and his dentist. The following steps are suggested for poetry enactment:

1. Begin by reading the poem aloud, modeling pronunciation and dramatic intonation and stress.
2. Clarify difficult or unusual words.
3. Invite students to read the poem chorally.
4. In pairs or small groups, allow students to prepare a dramatic rendition of the poem to be presented to the class (Peregoy & Boyle, 2008, p. 129).

When students read chorally, they may choose to brainstorm different ways to act our or pantomime the actions in the reading. Books and poems that lend themselves to repeatable patterns and concrete actions, such as *There was an old lady who swallowed a fly* (Taback, 1997), are most appropriate for less proficient students. As students develop proficiency, they can be challenged with more difficult books.

Readers Theater: Readers Theater is another instructional technique suggested by Kerry-Moran (2006) to nurture emergent readers; this approach could most certainly also support the ELL students. Kerry-Moran defined Readers Theater as "a staged reading of a play or dramatic piece of work designed to entertain, inform, or influence" (p. 317). Beginning English learners can read and dramatize a script from a story they have already read. Short selections with several characters are appropriate at the beginning level. Stories should have a simple structure with a clear beginning, middle, and end. *Cinderella* is a good example of a story appropriate for beginning level ELLs. Intermediate readers can create their own scripts to read and dramatize (Peregoy & Boyle, 2008). Kerry-Moran gave the following suggestions for implementing Readers Theater:

1. Choose Developmentally Appropriate Texts
2. Use Visual and Aural Aids
3. Determine the Dramatic Experience Level of the Children
4. Model Expressive Reading
5. Make Practice a Priority
6. Involve Families
7. Perform for an Audience

8. Be Persistence (pp. 320-322).

Writing: Drama activities can also be used to enhance creative thinking and writing skills. After a teacher reads a story aloud, children can dictate a story retelling, and then act it out during group time (Peregoy & Boyle, 2008). Wright and her colleagues (2007) recommended having a storytelling center in the classroom where children have the opportunities to tell stories that later will be dramatized by the class. Children dictate stories to a transcriber who does not influence or censor the content. The transcriber may use general prompts but only if children seem stuck. The authors recommended three kinds of prompts: 1) Opening Prompts are given such as "Would you like to tell me a story so we can act it out later?" 2) Continuation Prompts occur by rereading the last few sentences to the child then asking, "What happened next?" 3) Closing Prompts could include "Let me read it back to you to make sure it is right." Or "Thank you for telling me that story." (pp. 364-365). ELLs may need more frequent prompts than children who are native English speakers.

Crumpler and Schneider (2002) conducted a cross-study analysis of writing in a first grade classroom. The teacher and his first graders read *Where the Wild Things Are* (Sendak, 1988) and the teacher placed the students in the roles of the wild things so they could view the story from the perspective of the characters. The teacher then asked them questions like how they survived on the island. These questions helped the students elaborate on their characters; some even created new characters. The next day the children "traveled" back to the island and described what they needed on their journey and what they saw when they returned. At the end of the lesson, the students were required to think about their journey to the island and to draw and write what they liked

and remembered about their experience. In addition to reading and writing focused learning experiences, teachers can use drama and movement to enhance literacy instruction in other content areas.

Drama and Movement across the Curriculum

Drama and movement can be implemented across the curriculum easily and effectively. Once teachers begin thinking about methods of integrating action in other content areas, the possibilities become endless.

***Science**:* Learning in the outdoor environment is appealing to young learners and offers multiple learning opportunities. Introductions to stimulating environments such as oceans, swamps, and parks offer chances for observing and discussing science topics (Rillero, 2005). "Science experiences are a prime source of powerful new words because they use a common language to describe the world rather than a language that is specific to children's individual imaginations or home lives" (Rivkin, 2005, p. 41). Therefore, a framework for ELLs vocabulary development in many content areas can be established and constructed easily.

While studying trees, students' observation skills can be developed by studying living trees with magnifying glasses. Vocabulary terms such as leaves, stems, and veins can be actually seen and touched which will enable students to accurately comprehend the content information. As leaves fall to the ground, students can reenact the scene and develop vocabulary comprehension. Words, such as *rapidly, gingerly*, or *gently*, can be taught in a fun-filled, meaningful manner. A rainy or snowy day can provide quality experiences for young language learners. Rosenow (2008) recommended keeping slickers and boots in the classroom so children can splash in puddles, play in the rain, create snow

sculptures, and hunt for animal tracks. She also suggested taking children on "I Spy" walks in the neighborhood to examine natural wonders.

Math: Teaching math concepts can be taught kinesthetically. Students can collect measurement data by using their body lengths, feet, or hand spans to measure objects around the room. Rhythms and patterns can also be taught through activities involving movement. A patterning game, entitled Pass-Along-a-Pattern, encourages children to start a beat and pass it along to the next person who repeats it and passes it along to the next person, etc. Children can clap patterns of familiar songs or chants and ask their classmates to identify the songs or chants (Church, 2001). Songs like *Counting 1 to 20* by Jack Hartman, *Everything has a Shape* by Hap Palmer, and *Shapes All Around Us* by Music Movement & Magination are also available to help ELLs with basic math concepts (http://ww.songsforteaching.com/esleflesol.htm.). These songs incorporate music and movement with important math skills.

Social Studies: When teaching social studies content, multiple opportunities prevail for integrating role-play and creative dramatic experiences. For example, when studying community helpers, children can dress and act out the duties of postal workers, police officers, and firemen. Real-life scenarios can be re-enacted as well so that children can dramatize creatively the responsibilities of community helpers. When teaching geographical concepts, such as navigational directions, students can play Simon Says and point or move to various locations, i.e., north, south, east, west as Simon commands. Four Corners is another game that can reinforce location or direction words. Landforms can be role-played. Students can move their bodies in accordance with the way in which water moves ponds, brooks, streams, lakes, and oceans. The amount of action will vary.

Students can also enact growth or erosion through physical movement. The idea of acting out the meanings of words is associated with the Total Physical Response (TPR) approach.

The Total Physical Response (TPR) Approach

TPR is an approach to teaching language that pairs actions with words to convey meaning, (Asher as cited in Peregoy and Boyle, 2008). The teacher begins with simple action words like "stand up," "sit down," or "wave good-bye" and demonstrates the meaning with gestures and dramatization. As students progress, teachers use more advanced commands such as "put your backpack on the table." Through these activities students are introduced to different parts of speech and the words are learned in meaningful context. Peregoy and Boyle (2008) stated, "Experience is the glue that makes learning stick, and TPR illustrates this concept very well" (p. 213). Students' vocabulary repertoire can also increase through the implementation of the TPR technique. The teacher can write and say the terminology on the board or on flashcards and the students can perform the actions (Diaz-Rico, 2008).

Children should be familiar with specific words that describe movements (Jensen, 2000). The TPR approach along with various musical selections can be employed easily to teach the following concepts:

Body Parts: Songs like *Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes* by The Learning Station, *Funny Face* by Alain Le Lait, *Work Out to the Letter Sounds* by Jack Hartman, and *Put Your Hands Up In the Air* and *Turn Around* by Hap Palmer all use movement and music to teach the parts of the body. *Itchy, Itchy (Parts of the Body)* by Music

Movement & Magination is another humorous, creative song to help children learn body parts.

Actions: Children can learn colors through actions by moving to the songs *Colors* by Hap Palmer and *Colors All Around* by Jack Hartman. Verbs can be learned with selections like *Everyday Present Tense Verbs* by Learning English through Song. Children can also learn position words through songs such as *Sit Down, Stand Up* by Alain Le Lait.

The songs mentioned above and more helpful songs to help English language learners can be found at the website http://www.songsforteaching.com/esleflesol.htm. The song lyrics and movement ideas are available at the site. In addition to the TPR approach, the Language Experience Approach (LEA) is effective for young learners.

Language Experience Approach

The Language Experience Approach (LEA) is an instructional technique which teachers can implement easily within daily classroom instruction. This teaching strategy requires the teacher to facilitate a common, shared experience for students. After the shared activity, students may read, write, talk or listen about the experience (Tompkins, 2009). A common experience provides a framework for reading, writing, or discussing purposes.

Content learned from field trips, guest speakers, and scientific experiments are engaging ways to involve students in the LEA. Teachers can work with local museums, businesses, parks, and universities to plan trips that enhance content knowledge and language development. Guest speakers also provide opportunities for quality LEA activities as guests can represent community helpers, artists, musicians, medical workers,

and other individuals who can share their knowledge and experiences with the young children. Science experiments are often clarified using the LEA. To develop scientific language students can be engaged in hands-on activities, discuss their experiences, and write about them as a class or in individual language journals.

Games provide students with shared learning opportunities while encouraging mobility. Examples of games include:

Musical Follow the Leader: Ask students to form a circle and encourage them to think of all the ways that they can move their bodies. Explain that they are going to play a follow-the-leader game and have them move to music echoing the leader's motions (*Early Childhood Today*, 2004).

We're Movement Machines: Gather children in a circle and introduce various toys or machines. After observing the toys or machines in action, ask students to imitate the toys and machines. Talk about how the machine would move if it were turned on, then turn it on and ask children to describe how it moves. Have them explain why they think it moves the way it does (*Early Childhood Today*, 2004).

Falling Rain Dance: Watch it rain and then ask children to imitate the movements. Play music and have children dance slowly and quickly, depending on the changing tempo of the song. Add scarves and watch a beautiful dancing performance (*Early Childhood Today*, 2003).

Strike up the Gadget Band: Display a variety of common kitchen objects, such as spoons, bottles, boxes, etc., and ask children to think of the sounds that each will make. Then, distribute gadgets and experiment with the sounds. When children vary the sounds and the volume of their gadget band, quite a musical rendition can be created (*Early*

Childhood Today, 2003). More games especially effective for use with ELLs can be found at the following websites:

- http://www.esl4kids.net/games.html
- http://www.eslkidstuff.com/gamesmenu.htm
- http://www.english-4kids.com/games.htm

These websites offer a variety of games for teaching early literacy skills as well as other content area concepts and basic life skills.

Conclusion

The brain learns best when it is dynamically involved in exploring, inquiring, and analyzing (Gardner, 1999). Using drama and movement facilitates the brain to learn and to retain information and it provides a stimulating environment for most young learners, particularly ELLs. Formal and informal drama experiences help children build important literacy skills such as reading, writing, listening, and language production. To successfully integrate drama and movement into daily classroom instruction, teachers often employ the Total Physical Response and Language Experience Approach techniques. These strategies enable classroom teachers to effectively employ kinesthetic experiences through all content areas and support learning as an active, physical process.

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