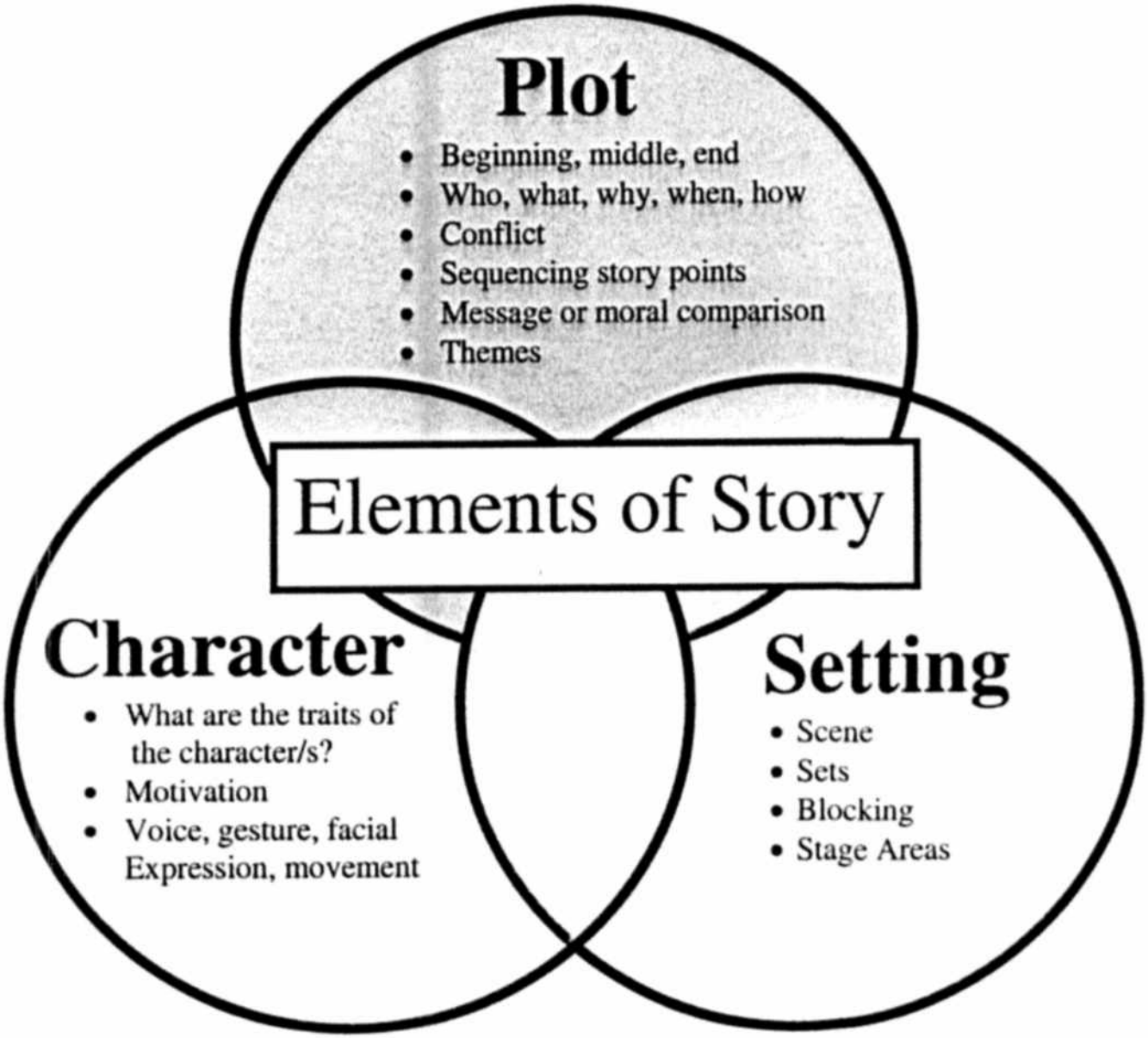

BUSD
Arts for All
presents...
Teaching
As A
Performing Art
K-5 Professional Development
Theatre Arts in the Classroom
Tuesday, October 29, 2013
2:30 pm – 4:00 pm
Third Grade
Presented by
Jay McAdams .....24th Street Theatre
John Spence ... Providencia Elementary
Alicia Richie..... Bret Harte Elementary

# Theatre = Storytelling



# 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
### Second and Third Grades

## Grade Two

Second grade students are entering Piaget's Concrete Operational Stage. They are still very concrete in their thinking but are beginning to think logically and sequentially, especially when aided by visual and verbal cues. They are not as egocentric as younger children, but they still see the world with themselves at the center. They are able to follow narrative in storytelling.

Children at this age are very literal. They do not understand irony or nuance. In instruction, expectations should be clearly stated and specific. In creative activities, these students do well with defined parameters.

***Performance concerns:*** One must not mistake enthusiasm for readiness at this age. Second graders will often volunteer excitedly when asked to perform, but may freeze or fall into giggles when actually selected to perform in front of the class. Spotlight anxiety, or stage fright, can be traumatic for young children and can cause lasting damage. Careful time and attention should be used to prepare students with fall back phrases, gestures, expressions well rehearsed for any performance in front of an audience.

**Skills to be built through drama activities:**

- Developing structured stories, understanding structure
- Understanding objectives and motivation
- Understanding character vs. person vs. actor
- Developing and resolving social conflicts
- Recognizing gender differences
- Developing independence
- Beginning to write with creativity and detail
- Determining, finding and using basic props, costume and set pieces
- Viewing live theatre and discussing production elements

**Suggested Theatre Components:**

- Retelling/dramatizing stories
- Creating original stories
- Developing characters
- Improvisations with partners
- Pantomime stories
- Tableaux of story points and objects
- Machine for cooperation
- Small group collaborations

**Discovering, reflecting, assessing:**

- Role Playing as self-discovery ad socialization
- Using goals and objectives
- Journaling with personal narrative
- Documenting

# Developmental Stages
# THEATRE
### Second and Third Grades

## Grade Three

Students in grade three love to please. They are curious and enjoy learning. It is an age where they still feel omnipotence, a sense of being the center of their universe, and they have a sense of urgency about their needs; however, they are beginning to feel empathy for others. They are emotionally expressive and recognize the cause and effect in their interactions. They have a growing sense of agency or empowerment.

Physically, children at this age are developing greater control of their fine motor skills. They can separate movement hemispheres (left/right, cross-axis movement). They can sort and organize objects and ideas, lead and follow directions. They can follow rules in a group. They begin to be able to critique their own artwork and that of others.

Students at this age are still very literal. Sarcastic or ironic humor may be lost on them. In instruction, it is still necessary to make expectations specific and clear, and give defined parameters for creative tasks.

**Performance concerns:** Students at this age will often volunteer enthusiastically when asked to perform, but may freeze or devolve into silliness when actually selected to perform in front of the class. Careful time and attention should be used to prepare students well for any performance in front of an audience.

**Skills to be built through drama activities:**

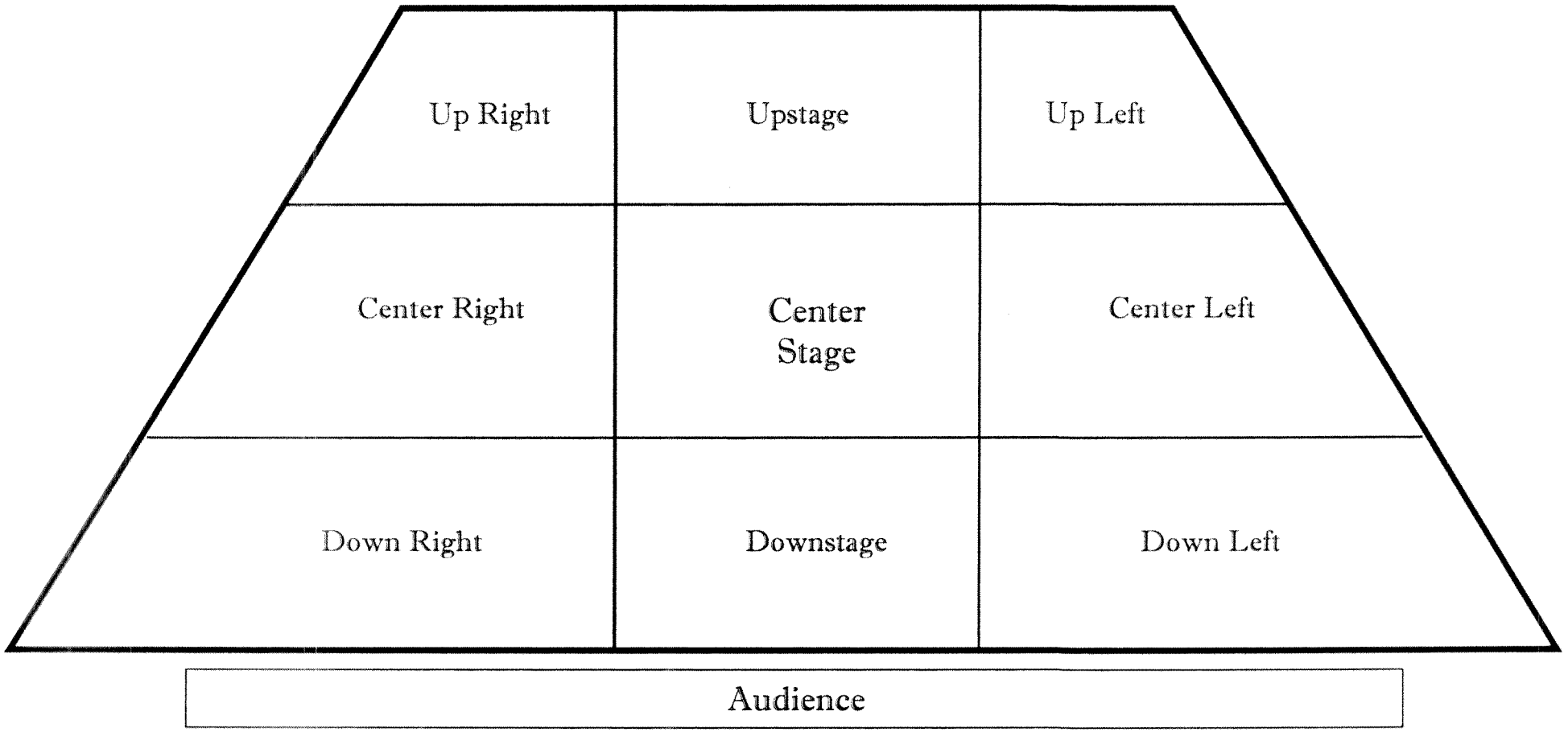
- Showing cause and effect through improvisation
- Resolving conflict through improvisation
- Identifying universal characters and themes in stories
- Separating and crossing movement hemispheres
- Following rules in a game
- Empathizing with characters in stories and with others in class
- Critiquing stories and performances
- Telling and writing stories with beginning, middle and end
- Designing, creating and gathering appropriate props, costumes and set pieces
- Viewing live theatre and discussing personal reactions to the production elements

**Suggested Theatre Components:**

- Retelling, dramatizing, and/or creating stories around significant themes
- Developing complex characters
- Improvisations with partners and small groups
- Pantomime complex stories
- Tableaux of plot points, situations, settings
- Machine for cooperation and abstraction
- Group collaborations

**Discovering, reflecting, assessing:**

- Identifying cause and effect
- Journaling about preferences and the learning process
- Documenting
- Designing and using assessment tools
- Willing suspension of disbelief




## 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!

# Glossary

Visual and Performing Arts: Theatre Content Standards.

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**acting areas.** See center stage, downstage, stage left, stage right, and upstage.

**actor.** A person, male or female, who performs a role in a play or an entertainment.

**actor's position.** The orientation of the actor to the audience (e.g., full back, full front, right profile, left profile).

**antagonist.** A person, a situation, or the protagonist's own inner conflict in opposition to his or her goals.

**articulation.** The clear and precise pronunciation of words.

**blocking.** The planning and working out of the movements of actors on stage.

**body positions.** See actor's position.

**catharsis.** The purification or purgation of the emotions (as pity and fear) caused in a tragedy.

**center stage.** The center of the acting area.

**character.** The personality or part an actor recreates.

**characterization.** The development and portrayal of a personality through thought, action, dialogue, costuming, and makeup.

**climax.** The point of highest dramatic tension or a major turning point in the action.

**cold reading.** A reading of a script done by actors who have not previously reviewed the play.

**collaboration.** The act of working together in a joint intellectual effort.

**commedia dell'arte.** A professional form of theatrical improvisation, developed in Italy in the 1500s, featuring stock characters and standardized plots.

**complication.** See rising action.

**conflict.** The opposition of persons or forces giving rise to dramatic action in a play.

**context.** The interrelated conditions in which a play exists or occurs.

**conventions of theatre.** See theatrical conventions.

**costume.** Any clothing worn by an actor on stage during a performance.

**creative drama.** An improvisational, process-centered form of theatre in which participants are guided by a leader to imagine, enact, and reflect on human experiences.

**crisis.** A decisive point in the plot of a play on which the outcome of the remaining actions depends.

**critique.** Opinions and comments based on predetermined criteria that may be used for self-evaluation or the evaluation of the actors or the production itself.

**cue.** A signal, either verbal or physical, that indicates something else, such as a line of dialogue or an entrance, is to happen.

**denouement design.** The final resolution of the conflict in a plot.

**design.** The creative process of developing and executing aesthetic or functional designs in a production, such as costumes, lighting, sets, and makeup.

**dialogue.** The conversation between actors on stage.

**diction.** The pronunciation of words, the choice of words, and the manner in which a person expresses himself or herself.

**directing.** The art and technique of bringing the elements of theatre together to make a play.

**director.** The person who oversees the entire process of staging a production.

**downstage.** The stage area toward the audience.

**dramatic play.** Children's creation of scenes when they play pretend.

**dramatic structure.** The special literary style in which plays are written.

**dramaturg.** A person who provides specific in-depth knowledge and literary resources to a director, producer, theatre company, or even the audience.

**dress rehearsals.** The final few rehearsals just prior to opening night in which the show is run with full technical elements. Full costumes and makeup are worn.

**electronic media.** Means of communication characterized by the use of technology (e.g., radio, television, and the Internet).

**Elizabethan theatre.** The theatre of England during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I and often extended to the close of the theatres in 1640.

**ensemble.** A group of theatrical artists working together to create a theatrical production.

**epic theatre.** Theatrical movement of the early 1920s and 1930 characterized by the use of such artificial devices as cartoons, posters, and film sequences distancing the audience from theatrical illusion and allowing focus on the play's message.

**exposition.** Detailed information revealing the facts of a plot.

**farce.** A comedy with exaggerated characterizations, abundant physical or visual humor, and, often, an improbable plot.

**form.** The overall structure or shape of a work that frequently follows an established design. Forms may refer to a literary type (e.g., narrative form, short story form, dramatic form) or to patterns of meter, line, and rhymes (e.g., stanza form, verse form).

**formal theatre.** Theatre that focuses on public performance in front of an audience and in which the final production is most important.

**genre.** Literally, kind or type. In literary and dramatic studies, genre refers to the main types of literary form, principally tragedy and comedy. The term can also refer to forms that are more specific to a given historical era, such as the revenge tragedy, or to more specific subgenres of tragedy and comedy, such as the comedy of manners.

**gesture.** An expressive movement of the body or limbs.

**Greek theatre.** Theatrical events in honor of the god Dionysus that occurred in Ancient Greece and included play competitions and a chorus of masked actors.

**improvisation.** A spontaneous style of theatre in which scenes are created without advance rehearsing or scripting.

**informal theatre.** A theatrical performance that focuses on small presentations, such as one taking place in a classroom setting. Usually, it is not intended for public view.

**Kabuki.** One of the traditional forms of Japanese theatre, originating in the 1600s and combining stylized acting, costumes, makeup, and musical accompaniment.

**level.** The height of an actor's head actor as determined by his or her body position (e.g., sitting, lying, standing, or elevated by an artificial means).

**makeup.** Cosmetics and sometimes hairstyles that an actor wears on stage to emphasize facial features, historical periods, characterizations, and so forth.

**masks.** Coverings worn over the face or part of the face of an actor to emphasize or neutralize facial characteristics.

**melodrama.** A dramatic form popular in the 1800s and characterized by an emphasis on plot and physical action (versus characterization), cliff-hanging events, heart-tugging emotional appeals, the celebration of virtue, and a strongly moralistic tone.

**mime.** An ancient art form based on pantomime in which conventionalized gestures are used to express ideas rather than represent actions; also, a performer of mime.

**minstrel show.** Musical theatre that usually consisted of performances of traditional African-American music and dance provided by white actors in blackface and characterized by exploitive racial stereotypes.

**monologue.** A long speech by a single character.

**motivation.** A character's reason for doing or saying things in a play.

**musical theatre.** A type of entertainment containing music, songs, and, usually, dance.

**Noh.** One of the traditional forms of Japanese theatre in which masked male actors use highly stylized dance and poetry to tell stories.

**objective.** A character's goal or intention.

**pacing.** The tempo of an entire theatrical performance.

**pageant.** Any elaborate street presentation or a series of tableaux across a stage.

**pantomime.** Acting without words through facial expression, gesture, and movement.

**pitch.** The highness or lowness of the voice.

**play.** The stage representation of an action or a story; a dramatic composition.

**playwright.** A person who writes plays.

**production values.** The critical elements of a production, such as acting, direction, lighting, costuming, sets, and makeup.

**projection.** The placement and delivery of volume, clarity, and distinctness of voice for communicating to an audience.

**props (properties).** Items carried on stage by an actor; small items on the set used by the actors.

**proscenium.** The enlarged hole cut through a wall to allow the audience to view the stage. It is also called the proscenium arch. The archway is in a sense the frame for the action on the stage.

**protagonist.** The main character of a play and the character with whom the audience identifies most strongly.

**puppetry.** Almost anything brought to life by human hands to create a performance. Types of puppets include rod, hand, and marionette.

**reader's theatre.** A performance created by actors reading script rather working from memory.

**rehearsal.** Practice sessions in which the actors and technicians prepare for public performance through repetition.

**rising action.** The middle part of a plot consisting of complications and discoveries that create conflict.

**run-through.** A rehearsal moving from start to finish without stopping for corrections or notes.

**script.** The written text of a play.

**sense memory.** Memories of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and textures. It is used to help define a character in a certain situation.

**stage.** The area where actors perform.

**stage crew.** The backstage technical crew responsible for running the show. In small theatre companies the same persons build the set and handle the load-in. Then, during performances, they change the scenery and handle the curtain.

**stage manager.** The director's liaison backstage during rehearsal and performance. The stage manager is responsible for the running of each performance.

**stage left.** The left side of the stage from the perspective of an actor facing the audience.

**stage right.** The right side of the stage from the perspective of an actor facing the audience.

**stock characters.** Established characters, such as young lovers, neighborhood busybodies, sneaky villains, and overprotective fathers, who are immediately recognizable by an audience.

**style.** The distinctive and unique manner in which a writer arranges words to achieve particular effects. Style essentially combines the idea to be expressed with the individuality of the author. These arrangements include individual word choices as well as such matters as the length and structure of sentences, tone, and use of irony.

**subtext.** Information that is implied by a character but not stated by a character in dialogue, including actions and thoughts.

**tableau.** A silent and motionless depiction of a scene created by actors, often from a picture. The plural is *tableaux*.

**text.** The printed words, including dialogue and the stage directions for a script.

**theatre.** The imitation or representation of life performed for other people; the performance of dramatic literature; drama; the milieu of actors, technicians, and playwrights; the place where dramatic performances take place.

**theatre of the absurd.** Theatrical movement beginning in the 1950s in which playwrights created works representing the universe as unknowable and humankind's existence as meaningless.

**theatrical conventions.** The established techniques, practices, and devices unique to theatrical productions.

**theatrical experiences.** Events, activities, and productions associated with theatre, film/video, and electronic media.

**theatrical games.** Noncompetitive games designed to develop acting skills and popularized by Viola Spolin.

**upstage.** Used as a noun, the stage area away from the audience; used as a verb, to steal the focus of a scene.

**vocal projection.** See projection.

**vocal quality.** The characteristics of a voice, such as shrill, nasal, raspy, breathy, booming, and so forth.

**volume.** The degree of loudness or intensity of a voice.

# 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 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

# Improvisation Exercises

# 1-2-3-4

Synonyms

One sentence, ABC, where-who-what

Introduction

This exercise covers the basic framework of an open scene. It is very structured and requires three people. Could one person set up a scene.

Description

This exercise is very structured. Each player in it has a specific role, and each sentence spoken has a specific role. It is crucial to emphasize that each step represents only one sentence. It is recommended to talk the players through this the first through times. ZERO – environment The first player comes on stage and creates an environment based on the set up of the scene. The environment is created in silence through mime. Once they have clearly defined their environment the second player comes on stage. For the sake of this explanation a kitchen is created. ONE – relationship The second player comes on stage and accepts the environment that the first player defined through her mime. The second player on contributes only one sentence to the scene and NO more. That sentence simply defines a relationship between the two players. For example a simple sentence like 'hi mom' would suffice. TWO – conflict The first player in the scene then speaks only one sentence. This sentence creates a conflict based on the ask-for, environment, or relationship. For instance 'you are late for dinner' is a simple choice. THREE – raising the stakes Player two now has a chance to speak her second sentence. This sentence accepts all of the previous elements of the story, and makes the conflict worse. 'I hate your cooking mom' would be a sentence that advances the story by making the conflict worse. FOUR – resolution The two player have to keep their mouths shut. Keep in mind that this is an exercise and not a scene. The third player now enters the scene, accepts the environment and speaks her singular sentence. This sentence will end the scene and resolve the conflict at hand. The resolution must somehow incorporate elements from the scene that went before. For

example, 'hi honey, lets go eat at mcswiney's tonight.' That is the end of the exercise and another three players get set up to do another one. They usually take about one to two minutes each.

Gimmicks

None

Variations

If players cannot keep to one sentence. Try doing the steps in gibberish or have someone offstage speak the player's sentence.

Credits

None

# Park Bench

Synonyms

None

Introduction

This is a character exercise. Could we have one player sitting on a park bench.

Description

The first player on-stage sits silently, displaying as much about their character as they can without verbalising it. The next player in makes a strong complimenting character choice. A complimenting character may be contrasting or supporting. The player coming on should make strong character choices as soon as they are off their seat. This means the character should be embodied in their walk, voice and intent. The two characters interact for about thirty seconds and the player that was on the bench first finds a reason to leave. This leaves the second player on the bench alone for a while. The next player creates a character and joins the player that is on the bench. This continues until all in the workshop have done one or more characters.

Gimmicks

Lock the players into the characters that they create, and have them meet again on the park bench.

Variations

Info Desk: a series of characters approach a department store info desk, and each request causes the person behind the desk to leave.

Credits

# Photograph

Synonyms

none

Introduction

This exercise gets people thinking and asssists with improvisation and working together.

Description

One person stands somewhere and freezes in a position doing something. One by one, people join in to make a photograph. At the end it is worked out what the photo is of and what everyone is doing.

Gimmicks

none

Variations

Make to the photo come to life at the end with everyone doing what their charcter is doing.

Credits

none

# 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

# Machines

Synonyms

None

Introduction

This exercise is designed to help players work together and develop physical cooperation.

Description

A machine that does not exist is called for and the players create the machine by each adding an essential part. There is no discussion amongst the players before starting. The first player starts with a repetitive activity and an associated noise. The next players add to the machine with some activity that fits into the previous player's activity. This continues until a machine is created. The machine is sped up and slowed down. Certain players can be asked to malfunction, and the whole machine must respond. There is no leader in the creation of the machine. It is important that all the players reflect the changes in each part of the machine.

Gimmicks

See Machines.

Variations

None

Credits

None

# Clap Focus

Synonyms

Snap Focus

Introduction

This warm up is to get people listening, responding fast and reacting without thinking. Everyone gets into a large circle.

Description

One person in the circle picks a random person in circle and claps at them. Sometimes taking a half step into the circle while doing so. The person that was singled out with the last clap immediately picks another random person out, by clapping at them. In turn the clapping flies back and forth across the circle. Ideally there will be a constant clapping noise. Eventually the players will be so attentive and so quick to respond it sounds like one person clapping rapidly. This warm-up usually ends when people's hand are denuded of flesh.

Gimmicks

Distractions–those that are not clapping are snapping their fingers

Variations

Listening can be made harder as the players by allowing the players to only point to the next person in turn. Eventually just eye contact is used as an acknowledged look flies around the room. Lastly the players stand silent, immobile, and with their eyes closed as they telepathically communicate amongst themselves. Once this warm-up is mastered more it can be combined with Word At A Time Story.

Credits

None

# Slow Motion Samurai

Synonyms

Poison arms

Introduction

This warm-up will get us feeling silly, get the blood flowing, and help get us working together. Start milling about the room.

Description

Once everyone is milling about comfortably they are told to start moving in slow motion. Once a stable rate of speed is determined the players all become Samurai with poisonous blades built into their fore arms. The object is to kill all the other Samurai in the room. If anyone is touched by the fore arm of another player they must die a poisoned death in slow motion. It is important that players keep their speed continuous. The point is not to win the warm-up, but to have fun. If players are moving too fast and massacring everyone else simply tell them to slow down. It helps people work together. The warm-up usually ends when there is a large pile of bodies on the floor.

Gimmicks

None

Variations

Players are allowed to block attacking Samurai poison fore arms with their own fore arm. The workshop can be divided into two groups, having a little feudal war.

Credits

# Silent Scene

Synonyms

None

Introduction

This is a silent scene. The players will set up an open scene, but there will be no talking during the scene.

Description

What more can be said. The common pitfalls in the silent scene is to start to use frequent gesticulations, lip reading, and pointing to get concepts across. It is not a charades scene, it is a silent scene. Everything thing is the same as any other scene, except the information is conveyed without speaking aloud.

Gimmicks

None

Variations

This scene can work great as a handle in any show.

Credits

# Zip Zap Zoop

Synonyms

None

Introduction

This warm-up gets our brains acting without thinking. Everyone into a circle.

Description

This is another motion around the circle warm-up. In this warm-up one of the players points to another player to one side of them and says 'zip'. That player turns to the next player in the circle, points to them and says 'zip'. Thus the 'zip' zips around the circle in one direction. At any time a receiving player can say 'zap' to the person pointing at them. When they do the player that said 'zip' and was pointing at them must change direction of the pointing. This means that they must quickly turn around, point and say 'zip to the person that just pointed at them. Now the 'zip' can zip around the circle, but changing direction every time there is a 'zap'. Lastly the person that receives the 'zip' may elect to yell 'zoop' and point at someone anywhere in the circle. That player then restarts the 'zip' going in the direction of their choice. The group must really pay attention for this to work.

Gimmicks

None

Variations

None

Credits

# Bippity Bippity Bop

## Synonyms

Elephant, Bunny Bunny

## Introduction

Everyone into a circle with one person in the centre. This warm-up breaks the ice, gets people listening and gets the blood flowing.

## Description

The person in the centre of the circle starts to spin madly. They rapidly count up to ten while spinning around. Once they arrive at the number ten they point to one of the people in the circle. The person pointed at sticks their arm in front of their face and dangles it like an elephant trunk. The people on either side of the "trunk person" must make the ears of the elephant. So the person on the left side uses their left arm to touch their head, and the person on the right uses their right arm to form the right ear. Yes it does look really silly. Meanwhile the dizzy person in the centre yells "Bippity Bippity Bop". The elephant must be formed before the centre person gets to "Bop". If the elephant does not have ears and a trunk by the time "Bop" is called then someone has to replace the person in the centre of the circle. Whichever person is responsible for the part that was not formed by the time "Bop" was yelled has to go into the centre. I.e., if the elephant has a trunk and a right ear, but no left ear then the person to the left of the trunk goes into the circle. Ties are decided by someone from the circle. This is continued until someone vomits.

## Gimmicks

Make more complicated animals that involve several people and are not symmetrical.

## Variations

Count silently, form a bunny instead of an elephant

# Hands

## Synonyms

Squeezer

## Introduction

This warm-up is to get us all working together and listening with our bodies as well as our ears. Everyone into a circle and join hands.

## Description

One person squeezes that hand that they are holding. The person that received the squeeze squeezes the hand of the other person that they are connected to. This should generate a squeeze pulse that races around the circle. A second squeeze can start circling in the opposite or same direction. There should be no clue that they are receiving the hand squeeze, and therefore no one can really predict when it will come to them. The exact same warm-up can be done with the players contacting palms and giving a push instead of a squeeze. This is more obvious when the pulse moves around the circle. Sometimes the palm pushing wave can generate considerable force.

## Gimmicks

None

## Variations

Squeezes can be started in different directions. The rate that the squeeze travels can also be adjusted. The player cannot squeeze the next person until the squeeze on their hand is over. So a long squeeze will take longer to travel around the circle. This would allow different pulses to travel overtop of each other and in different directions.

## Credits

None

THE DRAMA GAME

# 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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# Janet E. Rubin

Home

About Janet

Lessons

Links

AATE

Project Abstract

## *INTEGRATING DRAMA/THEATRE INTO THE CURRICULUM*

Drama means doing. Infusing drama/theatre techniques into the curriculum allows for hands-on learning that is meaningful and lasting. Such lessons provide learning opportunities in two content areas - drama/theatre and the subject with which it is paired.

According to Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde, the following are among features that are desireable for promoting effective teaching and learning across the curriculum.

- experiential, inductive, hands-on learning
- student-centered learning
- active learning in the classroom
- cooperative, collaborative activity
- learning and practicing many forms of expression [1]

These features are inherent in the drama/theatre experience.

Creative drama is process - oriented, student - centered, informal, and ideally suited for classroom activity. Theatre, while more product-centered and formal, also offers innovative instructional approaches. These ends of the drama/theatre continuum offer ample opportunities for integration and demonstrate that the arts are powerful partners for learning. The many types of activities available through this art form appeal to students with diverse learning styles, allow movement from teacher - centered to student - centered practices, involve and motivate students, and engage learners of all ages through active participation. Those busy but caring teachers who fear that incorporating drama/theatre will add to their workload should weigh that against the benefits for students. In addition, they should take heart from the knowledge that, "We don't have to steal time away from reading, math, or science to do art; art helps us to do science, math, and reading - to explore them, express them, and connect them." [2] Drama/theatre *is* an art that puts learning in the spotlight!

As you look at the lessons designed for this project, you will see how drama/theatre can be integrated into elementary, high school, and

university classes. You will notice the diversity in terms of students' ages, content covered, and activities used. Participants need little, if any, experience with this approach to curriculum. Once they try it, however, they are likely to be impressed by the results. Students are learning and having fun; teachers are taking pride in the creative achievements fostered.

The chart below is offered to help you in selecting activities to integrate into *your* curriculum. While not comprehensive, it provides a foundation from which you might start. [3]

| ACTIVITIES | DEFINITIONS |
|---|---|
| Beginning Activities | These are warm-up activities such as name games, chants, listening games, and other simple exercises designed to relax and motivate participants. |
| Games | These are more challenging than beginning activities and often focus upon developing players' concentration, imagination, and teamwork skills. Frequently, they are played with students seated or standing in a circle. |
| Sequence Games | The teacher takes a story or similar material and divides it into particular events or scenes, placing each on an index card. These are randomly distributed to players. When a student recognizes his/her cue being performed, that student goes next. Index cards should have the cue at the top and the new action at the bottom, preferably in a different font or color. The teacher should keep master list, in order, of cues. This helps students if the correct sequence is interrupted or lost. |
| Pantomime | Players use their bodies to communicate rather than their voices. Pantomime sentences and stories, creative movement exercises, and miming games are |

| | |
|---|---|
| | common examples. |
| Stories | A number of activities can be based upon stories and can range from simple to complex. In the former category, for example, are Noisy Stories. These are simple stories which players help to tell by making sounds or saying words associated with characters. Story Creation activities require that players develop stories and these activities can be stimulated by various items, including props, titles, students' own writing, or true events. Open-Ended Stories are those from which students build stories given only a beginning and then share their creations either orally, in writing, or through performance. Story Dramatization is the most complex informal dramatic activity, as it utilizes players' previously developed skills in service to playing stories. Once proficient here, students move naturally to formal theatrical endeavors. |
| Improvisations | These are spontaneously created performances based upon at least two of the following: who (characters), what (conflict), where (setting), when (time) and how (specifics of interpretation). Performed either in pantomime or with dialogue, improvisations should not be planned or rehearsed. Interesting episodes that emerge may be further developed through story creation.<br><br>Role-Playing improvisations deal with problem-solving. By replaying and switching roles, students are exposed to differing points of view. Role-Playing should not be confused with playing In-role. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | which is when the teacher enters the dramatization as a character. |
| Choral Reading | The voice is an expressive instrument. Interpreting text through choral reading gives students opportunities to experiment with sound shading, dynamics, pitch, pace, etc. Practice using solos, duets, and full choral offerings is good preparation for Readers Theatre. |
| Readers Theatre | Called Theatre of the Imagination, Readers Theatre offers performance opportunities without elaborate staging. Traditionally, this type of performance has players using stools, onstage and/or off-stage focus, and notebooks or music stands to hold scripts. A narrator may be used and readers may or may not play multiple roles. This type of performance is wedded to literature. A common misconception, however, is that this is simply expressive reading. To truly impact an audience, Readers Theatre must be more than that. Rich characterization, suggested movement, and clear interpretation of the literature are required. In their minds' eyes, the audience completes the stage pictures suggested by the interpreters. |

When using these techniques, the atmosphere in the classroom may be lively and there is, for some educators, risk in being a co-explorer with students rather than an authority figure. Creativity, however, is looking at things in new ways. Look, therefore, at yourself and your students as partners in the great adventure of learning through drama/theatre. Enjoy the challenges and the rewards you will encounter. Have fun while learning!

[1] Steven Zemelman, Harvey Daniels, and Arthur Hyde. Best Practice: New Standards

for Teaching and Learning in America's Schools, 2nd ed. (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1998) pages 5 - 10.

[2] Steven Zemelman, Harvey Daniels, and Arthur Hyde. Best Practice: New Standards for Teaching and Learning in America's Schools, 2nd ed. (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1998) pages 163.

[3] For resources related to activities and definitions, please follow the link to Books.

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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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