



UNIVERSITI
TEKNOLOGI
MARA

Monograph Series of UiTM Pahang

COMPASS

Compilation of Pahang Scholars' Synergy

Vol. 1. No. 2 (Teaching and Learning Practices)

ISSN 1985-9937



Group Activities to Encourage Participation in Drama Classes

Tengku Nazatul Shima Tengku Paris

ABSTRACT

It can be demotivating to teachers when students remain shy, passive and reserved when asked to participate in drama classes. What the students need are the right activities and techniques so that they will be inspired to learn and participate better in any given tasks, such as acting, singing and dancing in drama classes. Students' inability to participate in drama classes might be due to lack of experience in drama lessons and also lack of confidence. This paper focuses on the value and the significance of group activities to encourage participation in drama classes as well as encouraging the learners' self expression and urging their sense of creativity.

Keywords: *drama classes, group activities, learning*

Introduction

Drama is defined by experts as a means of knowing, teaching and learning. It is used at all levels of education from pre-school, kindergarten through to university and beyond. Drama is a learning medium that emerges from the spontaneous act of students and from this point it can foster the participants' artistic sensitivity, awareness of oneself, friends and the world and at the same time stimulate one's dramatic imagination.

Literature Review

Collaborative learning in groups encourages students to use their creativity to complete any given tasks with a sense of responsibility to get it done. The research literature suggests that group work results in a greater quantity of output and negotiation of meaning than that found in teacher fronted classes (Long and Porter, 1985). In addition, the negotiation of meaning, accomplished through interactional moves such as clarification requests and confirmation checks, have been shown to result in modified output (Pica et al. 1989). Of particular interest to the foreign language classroom, it has also been demonstrated that more negotiation of meaning

may occur when two non-native speakers are interacting (Varonis and Gass, 1985).

Olsen and Kagan (1992) identify four components that are conducive to successful collaborative learning: thoughtful planning of tasks; a rational approach to the construction of groups; accountability by each participant for the successful completion of the assigned task and the development of social skills necessary for the group to work effectively. Swain (1993) identified a fifth point: that the task results in positive interdependence among the group members. Positive interdependence means that each member in a group will work hand in hand together to fulfill each task. This positive interdependence encourages interaction and at the same time making sure everybody will enjoy the benefit.

Drama, the Way We Do It

The drama groups consist of 3 different groups a, b, and c of Pre-TESL students. There are 19 to 21 students in each group. Basically the groups of students come from the east coast: Pahang, Kelantan and Terengganu. Majority of the group members are from Kelantan and Terengganu. Many of the students were very reserved and shy at first when asked to perform in any form of acting, singing and dancing in the drama classes before group activities were introduced. After participating in various group activities, these groups of students showed encouraging improvement and made the instructor proud and enthusiastic to come out with more encouraging group activities. Some of the samples of the group activities are as below:

Warming Up Activities

Students are asked to do stretching exercise and a few warming up exercises to warm them up before proceeding with other activities, then the students are asked to do some relaxation exercise and deep breathing exercise.

Vocal Warm Up

A vocal warm-up prepares the voice for speaking. The students need to warm up the vocal chords just as they would warm up any other muscle in their body. Students are asked to practice their vocal exercise in a circle by saying the alphabet "a" followed by "ab", "abc", "abcd", "abcde",

“abcdef”, “abcdefg” until the end which is alphabet “abcdefghi.....z”. This vocal exercise is meant for one single breathing.

Another vocal exercise is the students have to say the vocal “sh” with the count of 1 to 5. This is followed by vocal “z” also with the count of 1 to 5. Vocal “z” represents the buzzing sound of the bees. It can come with many situations for instance:

- “Happy bee” – The students have to make the happy “z” sound
- “Sad bee” – The students have to make the sad “z” sound
- “Angry bee” – The students have to make the angry “z sound”

The students have a lot of fun imitating the bee’s sound which turns the classroom to be very noisy.

Stick Game

In this activity students have to sit in a circle and are given two sticks each and they have to hit the stick following the instruction given by the instructor by the count of “1234”. With the count of “1” the students have to take the stick from the floor. “2” the students have to lift up the sticks. “3” the students have to hit both sticks and “4” the students have to put both sticks in front of the student that sits next to him or her. If the students fail to follow the instruction they will end up losing sticks and they have to leave the circle. This activity is very lively and fun as the students need focus in order to hit the stick according to the rhythm. This game aims to encourage concentration and cooperation.

Communicating with Others

This group activity aims to focus on the group energy.

“Who are you”– everyone sits in a circle. One person starts the game by saying his name and where does he come from. The second person in the circle says the first person’s name and where does he come from and his own. The third person in the circle says the first person’s name, where does he come from, the second person’s name and where does he come from and his own. And so on down the line.

“Group Pulse” – The students stand in a tight huddle and put their arms around each other and bend over as low as they can go. They then start to hum quietly. They will increase the pitch and intensity of the hum

while they slowly stand erect. Eventually the sound becomes a great, open-mouthed roar.

“Group Cheer”– The students stand in a tight huddle and pile up their hands in the middle. They will then shout their cheer words for instance “ho ho hurray”.

“Group Choral Singing” – The students sing any simple song for instance “incy wincy spider” in a round.

“Poco-Poco” and “Chicken Dance”

Another group activity to throw away the students’ shyness is by doing “Poco-poco” and “chicken dance” together with their friends. In this activity they will have fun learning the simple and easy to follow steps of the dance.

Learning Benefits of the Activities

There are many impacts that can be seen after several group activities taking place. The students are no longer passive, reserved and loss the sense of direction. They now carry with them the brand new image, with confidence, a sense of pride and a sense of purpose. They are able to think on one’s feet, problem solver with a sense of presence, empathy, with the ability to delay gratification and with confidence to put their creative ideas into action. These values are extremely important when they go out into the real world.

Conclusion

This classroom experience shows that students would learn better if they receive enough motivation to boost their self esteem through collaborative learning in drama classes. The confidence will emerge naturally as they interact and work with friends. Their friends can help them to mature and move ahead. Thus, collaborative learning or group activities can be a good platform for students to participate better in drama classes.

References

- Long, M. & Porter, P. (1985). Group work, Interlanguage Talk, and Second Language Acquisition. *TESOL Quarterly*, 19: 207-228.
- Olsen, R & Kagan, S. (1992). About cooperative learning. In Kessler, C. (Ed.) *Cooperative Language Learning*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents. Pp.1-30.
- Pica, T., Holliday, L., Lewis, N. & Morgenthaler, L. (1989) Comprehensible output as an outcome of linguistic demands on the learner. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 11: 63-90.
- Swain, M. (1993). The Output Hypothesis: Just Speaking and Writing Aren't Enough. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 50(1).
- Varonis, E.M. & Gass, S. (1985) Non-native/non-native Conversations: A model for negotiation of meaning. *Applied Linguistics*, 6:71-90.
-

TENGKU NAZATUL SHIMA BINTI TENGKU PARIS, Faculty of Education, Universiti Teknologi MARA Pahang.
rujuk_shima@yahoo.com