



SHARING RESOURCES

Reader's theatre to promote intercultural sensitivity and a positive attitude towards learning EFL

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Introduction

Learning a foreign language to communicate effectively with people of different origins requires not only learning the grammatical aspects of the language but also understanding how cultural aspects affect the delivery and reception of messages. This is why the development of intercultural communicative competencies has become one of the main tasks of English language teaching in the national context. Students in elementary and middle school are called upon, through the national curriculum, to develop intercultural competencies. Specifically, 5th and 6th-grade students are expected to “demonstrate curiosity and interest in learning about their own reality as well as other realities and cultures, valuing their own and expanding their knowledge of the world” by learning English (Mineduc, 2012).

The development of intercultural sensitivity can be achieved through various techniques and didactic strategies in the classroom. One of them is readers' theatre. Reader's theatre is defined as an instructional method that requires students to read texts aloud (Lekwilai, 2014). This technique allows learners to comprehend the text while developing aspects such as pronunciation and fluency in the foreign language. By developing this technique, learners bring the text to life, further connecting it to their own emotions and attitudes towards the thematic content of the text. This is done through the use of vocal expressions, emphasis, and appropriate fluency to give comprehensibility to the oral delivery of the written text. In this way, drama-reading is an appropriate didactic strategy for the development of intercultural sensitivity when the texts used contain cultural content. This didactic strategy promotes students' motivation towards foreign language learning (Tsou, 2011).

The aim of this proposal is then to promote and enhance reading skills and confidence, together with the development of intercultural sensitivity in students at elementary school. Reader's Theatre is an easy activity to implement in the classroom, whose benefits range from increasing fluency, building self-confidence, and in the case of this proposal, dealing with the intercultural aspects of communicative competence.

The following lesson is put forth to teachers with all the necessary activities and resources to be implemented, which will contribute in an engaging way to create an innovative methodology to foster reading practice and intercultural sensitivity in the classroom.

Connections with the Curriculum

TARGET GROUP: 5th - 6th grade

TIME REQUIRED: three weeks (about 90 minutes each class)

UNIT: Let's Travel

CONTENT: Vocabulary related to means of transport, natural places, the city, family members, daily activities.

GRAMMAR: Present simple

Learning Objectives:

- Read comprehensively literary authentic texts supported with visuals that contain words of frequent use, word families, and repetitions of words and phrases, to identify the main idea, characters, sequence of events, and thematic vocabulary.
- Reproduce orally a literary text to develop prosodic features of the language such as intonation, stress, and rhythm.

Attitudinal Objectives:

- Show respect towards other people, realities, or cultures, acknowledging their contributions and appreciating diverse ways of living.
- Show a positive attitude to themselves and their abilities to learn and speak in a foreign language.

Procedure

Class 1: Reading

1. Pre-reading: Warming-up activities (10-12 minutes)

- **Motivating students:** students are shown two pictures, one of a red brick building and one of a traditional Indian house. They are asked orally the following questions:
 - What do you see in the pictures?
 - What things are the same and what things are different?
- **Activating prior knowledge:** students are shown a picture of the world and asked the following question.
 - In which country do you think each house is?
 - What do you know about these countries?
 - In which country would you like to live?
- **Vocabulary work:** Students will be shown a set of words and related pictures to match. Pictures will be in a digital format, but they could also be presented as flash cards or drawings.

Keywords: to mail - sea - tree - family members - peacocks - river - to flow - giant - to ride.

Previewing and predicting the text (10 minutes approx.)

Students are shown the book 'Same same, but different' by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw, which tells the story of two pen friends from India and the US, who talk about their lives. Students will be asked to have a general look at the pictures in pairs, without reading, and are asked to predict what they think the text is about.

2. While-reading activities

- **Skimming:** (10 minutes)

1. The teacher reads the book aloud, and students follow the reading. Students are asked the following questions:

- Were your predictions correct?
- What is the book about?

2. Students are asked to complete the following chart.

Characters	What they like:	Where they live:

- **Scanning:** (10 minutes)

Students are asked to answer the following TRUE and FALSE statements in pairs:




1. _____ Elliot's family is small; Kailash's family is large.
2. _____ Elliot and Kailash's pets are very similar.
3. _____ Kailash lives in a city and Elliot in a village.
4. _____ Elliot and Kailash walk to school.
5. _____ Elliot likes art class and Kailash likes yoga class.

3. Post-reading activities: 10 minutes

Students write a short sentence on a sticky note with their opinion about the text and stick it to a poster provided by the teacher.

4. Assessment: (10 minutes)

Students will be asked to self-assess their participation in the class using the following rubric.

			
Participation	I participated in class.	I sometimes participated in class.	I did not participate in class.
Class Activities	I answered the questions related to the text.	I answered only some questions related to the text.	I did not answer the questions related to the text.
Respect to turns	I respected my classmates' turns.	It was difficult for me to respect my classmates' turns.	I did not respect my classmates' turns.
Respect to other cultures	I showed respect to the different cultures in the text.	It was difficult for me to show respect to the different cultures in the text.	I did not show respect to the different cultures in the text.

Class 2: Preparation for Reader's theatre

1. **Recap:** Teacher elicits information about the text read last class. (5 minutes)
2. **Introduction to reader's theatre:** Teacher explains to the students what reader's theatre is, what they have to do and why. (5-7 minutes)
3. **Pair formation:** students are paired up or divided into small groups, depending on class size. (5 minutes)
4. **Role's assignment:** students are given the script with their parts of the text to perform. (5 minutes)

5. Teacher’s role modelling: teacher reads aloud the whole text twice and students follow the reading on their scripts. Optional activity: teacher records the text in advanced and plays the audio twice. It would also be a good idea to have a native speaker record the text in an audio file. The pace will depend on students’ listening proficiency. (7-10 minutes)

6. Preparation for reading aloud: teacher models some physical and vocal warm-up activities to prepare students for their performance like breathing exercises and vocalizations. (5 minutes)

Example 1: smell the flowers <https://www.moshikids.com/articles/deep-breathing-exercises-for-kids/>

Example 2: humming and tongue trill exercise.

After the warming up exercises, the teacher reads the text aloud again (or plays the audio) and each student follows attentively on their own script sheet. (5-7 minutes)

Then each student works independently on the reading aloud of their part of the script. Teacher monitors pronunciation, intonation, and fluency. (15 minutes)

7. Script rehearsal: each pair or small group get together to practice reading the whole script. The teacher provides feedback on students’ performance taking turns to visit the groups. (20 minutes)

Class 3: Performance

1. Preparation for reading aloud: the teacher models some physical and vocal warm-up activities to prepare students for their performance like:

- a) breathing exercises: the siren sound (5 minutes)
- b) tongue twister: “red leather, yellow leather, red leather, yellow leather.”
















2. Performance: students get ready to perform, making use of their folders with the script. Optional: students can make use of some props as bow ties, hats or any other distinctive object to personalize the pairs or small groups (5 minutes)

Students take turns to read aloud, introducing their pair or group in the following way:

Hello everyone, we are the xxx Company and we are going to read the story Same same but different”

Each pair or group reads the story and bows at the end (time frame will depend on the number of students, therefore plan accordingly).

3. Students are asked to self-assess their performance on the reader's theatre using the following rubric:

I used an appropriate speaking voice.			
I looked at the audience.			
I read my lines with expression.			
I worked cooperatively with my classmate.			
I showed respect for the different cultures in the text.			

4. Teacher congratulates students and awards them with either a lapel pin or a badge, as a souvenir of their intercultural sensitivity and their performance.

Students create a lapel pin or a badge as a souvenir of their performance and their awareness of intercultural sensitivity. (optional)

References

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