



ADVANTAGES OF ROLE PLAYS FOR STUDENTS OF NON-PHILOLOGICAL GROUPS

Jumayeva Shahlo Shokirovna

Teacher of the “Languages” department

Tashkent Institute of irrigation and agricultural mechanization engineers, Bukhara branch
Uzbekistan, Bukhara

ABSTRACT

The article is about role plays and their advantages in EFL classes. It shows how role plays helps students to develop different skills. And there are some examples of role plays given in the article

Key words: Role plays, usage of methods, TPR activities, educational conversation, circle conversation, debate, brainstorm

While learning and analyzing the usage of methods in the education of developed countries we can divide the methods into several groups:

I. Perceptive methods which help to learn, analyze and understand the information and to practice knowledge:

- lecture, story, explanation
- performance, illustration and video method.

II. Reproductive methods which help to acquire, inspire and practice knowledge:

- working with books
- laboratory works
- exercise (tasks)

III. Methods which help to develop student's skills:

- educational conversation
- circle conversation
- debate
- brainstorm
- role-play

IV. Methods which help to analyze problems, solve problems and strengthen students' studying independently:

- tasks with problems
- individual practice
- projects

So modern educational methods are so various and many-sided that is closely connected with teacher's ability of using them in the lessons effectively.

Let's take role-play or drama in English lessons. Role-play offers an excellent opportunity for students to develop fluency in English. Drama is concerned with both the product (performance) and the process of language learning. Drama gives children to activate language and have fun. It encourages

children to speak and gives them the chance to communicate, even with limited language, using nonverbal communication such as body movements and facial expression.

When planning role-play activities, teachers should take into account: 1) the learners' interests, 2) the learners' needs, 3) the learners' age, 4) and even the time of the day. Not all children are good at acting. But most children like drama activities. Teacher should introduce drama into classroom in small steps. Start with easy, guided activities (miming) and move on to less controlled activities (games) as the children gain confidence. Total Physical Response (TPR) activities are an excellent way to introduce role-play.

- touch your nose
- touch your feet
- touch the door
- touch the blackboard.

Listen - and - do activities can be part of almost any lesson. Such activities help children:

- to acquire English by listening to instructions
- to be active and enjoy doing things in English
- to use nonverbal communication to interpret meanings (gestures)
- to absorb good pronunciation and intonation patterns

PROCEDURE

For the role play activities in my classes, there are six major steps in the procedure.

1. Decide on the Teaching Materials

The teacher must decide which teaching materials will be used for role play activities. The teaching materials can be taken from text books or non-textbook teaching materials such as picture books, story books, readers, play-scripts, comic strips, movies, cartoons and pictures. The material is selected ahead of time by the teacher. The teacher can also create his or her own authentic teaching materials for role play activities. The teaching materials should be decided based on students' level and interests, teaching objectives and appropriateness for teaching

2. Select Situations and Create Dialogs

Then a situation or situations to be role played should be selected. For every role plays situation, dialogs should be provided (by the teaching materials or by the teacher) or created by the students themselves.

3. Teach the Dialogs for Role Plays

The teacher needs to teach the vocabulary, sentences, and dialogs necessary for the role play situations. The teacher needs to make sure the students know how to use the vocabulary, sentences and dialogs prior to doing the role play activities, otherwise, the teacher should allow students to ask how to say the words they want to say.

4. Have Students Practice the Role Plays

Students can practice in pairs or in small groups. After they have played their own roles a few times, have them exchange roles. That way, students can play different roles and practice all of the lines in the role play. When students are confident enough to demonstrate or perform in front of the class, the teacher can ask them to do so for their classmates.

5. Have Students Modify the Situations and Dialogs

Once students have finished and become familiar with an original role play situation, they can modify the situations and/or dialogs to create a variation of the original role play.

6. Evaluate and Check Students' Comprehension

Finally, the teacher shall evaluate the effectiveness of the role play activities and check if students have successfully comprehended the meanings of the vocabulary, sentences and dialogs. There are several ways to do student evaluations. Students can be given oral and listening tests relating to the role plays. Example oral tests can include the following.

- Students are asked to answer some simple questions relating to the role plays.
- Students are asked to reenact the role plays.
- Students are asked to translate the role plays into their native language.

For listening tests, beginning students can do simpler tasks such as: "listen and circle", "listen and number", "listen and match" types of questions. For more advanced students, they can be asked to write the words, lines, and/or dialogs in the role plays. They can also be asked to create and write variations of the role plays. Teachers can also evaluate students' understanding and comprehension while observing students' interactions, practices, and performances of their role plays.

Types of Roles

Role plays can range from highly structured, short exchanges, as in a restaurant, to those that are longer and more open ended. If you want a highly structured role play, you can write it up in situation cards similar to the cue cards described earlier. Here is an example of a situation card.

Instructions: You are making an appointment with your professor. You have to do this through the college secretary.

1. Greet the secretary.
2. Explain that you want to meet with your professor.
3. State why you want to meet (to discuss course content, to explain an absence, to ask about your exam grade).
4. List your available times.
5. Ask the secretary when the professor is available.
6. Ask if the secretary needs any other information.
8. Thank the secretary for her time.

You can go even further and fill in the actual lines, or portions of the lines, that students are to say if you think they need that degree of support at beginning levels. As they learn their parts, urge students to hand in the cue cards. For adults, choose roles to play from everyday life—family members, store clerks, police officers, teachers, and social workers in various situations. However, students, particularly younger ones, may also enjoy taking on fantasy roles. One kindergarten teacher had to watch the story of “Little Red Riding Hood” role-played many times to satisfy all of her little wolves. Characters from television, from the students’ textbook, and from other books students are reading, are also suitable for role-play activities. Situations with fewer roles than there are students are preferable over those with too many roles. Two students can usually perform the same role—for example, two police officers, two customers—and support each other in carrying out the role play. You can also divide the class into small groups for role plays that

involve only three or four people, having each group perform the same role play. Generally, fewer roles mean more talking time for each student.

Miming practice

Students learn gestures to go with words that are repeated in a story. Then as the teacher reads the story aloud, the children do the actions when they hear the key words. Steps of the miming practice are:

1) Select a story with repeated words such as the story of "The big cat in the big house".

2) Select gestures to go with the repeated words:

Big – starting above your head, trace a big circle with your hands

Cat – show gestures like cats washing themselves, licking their paws

House – draw a house in the air

Long – stretch both arms out straight to make a long line

Tail – wave an arm behind your back like cat's tail

Happy – mime that you are happy

Hair – point to your hair or touch your hair

Small – trace a small circle above the floor with your hands

Sad – mime that you are sad

3) Teach students the repeated words

4) Slowly read the story aloud and have the students do the appropriate gestures as they hear each repeated word.

Once upon a time there lived a big cat in a big house. The Big cat had long black hair and a very long, long tail. The cat was very happy that it was very big. Next door to the big cat there lived a small mouse in a small house. The mouse was very small and so was its house. The small mouse was very sad that it was very, very small.

Miming stories

Students will willingly compose their own stories. They welcome the chance to show what they can do with the language.

1) Give students a list of words you want to know or to review. For example: heart, apple, eat, tired

2) Ask students to compose a story using the words.

3) When they have finished writing their stories, have the students take turns miming their stories while the rest of the class tries to guess the whole story.

CONCLUSION

Role play is really a worthwhile learning experience for both the students and the teacher. Not only can students have more opportunities to "act" and "interact" with their pairs trying to use the English language, but also students' English speaking, listening, and understanding will improve. Role play lightens up the atmospheres and brings liveliness in the classes. Students learn to use the language in a more realistic, more practical way. Thus they can become more aware of the usefulness and practicality of English. Role play is indeed a useful teaching technique which should be experimented and applied by ESL teachers more often in the ESL classrooms.

So, use of drama activities provide meaningful and enjoyable language practice and they encourage learners to explore the wonderful world of the English language and the teachers' aim of language teaching consists of it.

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