

## THE EFFECTS OF USING ROLE PLAY GAMES OR DRAMA IN ENGLISH LEARNING PROCESS

*This article deals with the matter of using role plays for English lessons. Also, some techniques of using them during the lessons and out class activities are considered. It is shown that role plays can give very effective results.*

*Keywords: role-play, games, drama, students, to practice English.*

### ЭФФЕКТИВНОСТЬ ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЯ РОЛЕВЫХ ИГР, ИГРЫ ИЛИ ДРАМЫ В ПРОЦЕССЕ ИЗУЧЕНИЯ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА.

*Эта статья посвящена вопросу использования роль играет на уроках английского языка. Кроме того, некоторые методы их использования во время занятий и вне класса деятельности рассматриваются. Показано, что ролевые игры могут дать очень эффективные результаты.*

*Ключевые слова: ролевые игры, игры, драмы, студенты, практиковать английский язык.*

In the process of learning English language role-plays give students the opportunity to demonstrate how to use English in real life situations and make them focus more on communication than on grammar. Role-play activities can be a lot of fun however a class full of shy students may be reluctant to participate so it is important to know your students.

Role plays are excellent way of getting your students to practice their English. They simulate real life situations and allow them to act out what they would do in real situation. There are two ways a role play can go: scripted and non-scripted. With a scripted role play, the teacher might use an example in a text book. This is a good idea for a warm up exercise, by getting everyone to split up into a pairs and allow them to speak to their partner, taking on different roles. Non-scripted ones are when students are given a role each and must use whatever knowledge they have in order to speak with that partner. Below is a list of ideas for a general English class. This can be adapted to suit a situation.

Regardless of what type of role-play you intend to do, it is imperative that students feel comfortable with the necessary structures and vocabulary. This makes role-plays ideal for the final lesson on a particular topic. If students perform well, move on to the next chapter and if students struggle, address any mistakes in the following lesson. The feedback given in any role-play lesson should be primarily positive and focus on pronunciation, acting, and creativity. Role-plays are about encouraging your students and building their self confidence.

**Mini-role plays** can be done in any lesson as a practice activity. Rather than just practice the model dialogue in pairs or groups, encourage students to be creative and use props to better reflect a real life situation. Students should have some space to move about the classroom and be given extra time to practice. If the model dialogue is four to six sentences total, a practice activity in pairs may take five minutes with only two or three demonstrations while a mini-role play of the same length may take ten to fifteen minutes to prepare with about ten minutes for performances. This activity can even be done in the same lesson as the introduction and drilling of a new topic if your students have a good understanding of the new material.

Of course, role-plays can also take an entire lesson especially if students are put in groups instead of in pairs. A lesson such as this would be ideal after several lessons on the same topic.

A directions themed role play might be best in groups of three or four where each student must say a minimum of three or four lines. Structuring the activity in this way will give your students some easy guidelines to follow. You can prepare your students by explaining the activity at the end of a class, placing them in their groups, and asking them to think about what they would like to do. Suggest that they bring in any props they would like to use and try to provide some if possible. In the next class, quickly review the target material before splitting the class into groups and dedicate half of the time to practice with the remaining half being for performances. If your students are really eager to perform, ensure that every group gets an opportunity to present their role-play to the class even if it means performing during the next lesson as well. If students are reluctant, then have only the groups that volunteer present.

Now let's define, what is role-play? Role-play is any speaking activity when you either put yourself into somebody else's shoes, or when you stay in your own shoes but put yourself into an imaginary situation! Imaginary people - The joy of role-play is that students can 'become' anyone they like for a short time! The President, the Queen, a millionaire, a pop star ..... the choice is endless! Students can also take on the opinions of someone else. 'For and Against' debates can be used and the class can be split into those who are expressing views in favour and those who are against the theme. Imaginary situations – functional language for a multitude of scenarios can be activated and practised through role-play. 'At the restaurant', 'Checking in at the airport', 'Looking for lost property' are all possible role-plays. Now let's think a bit, why we use role plays in our English lessons? It is widely agreed that learning takes place when activities are engaging and memorable. Jeremy Harmer advocates the use of role-play for the following reasons: a) It's fun and motivating. b) Quieter students get the chance to express themselves in a more forthright way. c) The world of the classroom is broadened to include the outside world - thus offering a much wider range of language opportunities

In addition to these reasons, students who will at some point travel to an English-speaking country are given a chance to rehearse their English in a safe environment. Real situations can be created and students can benefit from the practice. Mistakes can be made with no drastic consequences.

**Here the role of the teacher can be as following:**

**Facilitator** - students may need new language to be 'fed' in by the teacher. If rehearsal time is appropriate the feeding in of new language should take place at this stage.

**Spectator** - The teacher watches the role-play and offers comments and advice at the end.

**Participant** - It is sometimes appropriate to get involved and take part in the role-play yourself. As students practice the role-play they might find that they are stuck for words and phrases. In the practice stage the teacher has a chance to 'feed-in' the appropriate language. This may need the teacher to act as a sort of 'walking dictionary', monitoring the class and offering assistance as and when necessary. If you are not happy doing this and you feel that the process of finding the new language should offer more student autonomy, you could have 'time-out' after the practice stage for students to use dictionaries to look up what they need. As mentioned in the role of the teacher section, feeding-in the language students need is fundamental. By doing so, they will learn new vocabulary and structure in a natural and memorable environment. It is a chance to use real and natural language. There are many ways to correct mistakes when using role-play. It is rarely appropriate for the teacher to jump in and correct every mistake. This could be incredibly demotivating! Some students do like to be corrected straight after a role-play activity, while the language is still fresh in their minds. Sentences with errors can be written on the board for the group to correct together.

Self-correction - if you have the equipment to record the role-plays either on audiocassette or on video, students can be given the opportunity to listen to the dialogue again and reflect on the language used. They may find it easy to spot their own mistakes. Here I use students' mobile dictaphones. I record them the entire play. If they have some difficulties I can record the separate expressions they need. It gives an expecting effect, I think.

Peer-correction - Fellow students may be able to correct some mistakes made by their peers. Students could be asked to listen out for both great bits of language they'd like to use themselves, and some mistakes they hear. Be careful to keep peer-correction a positive and profitable experience for all involved.

Making a note of common mistakes yourself and dealing with them in future classes ensures that the students don't lose motivation by being corrected on the spot or straight after the role-play. Negotiate with students and ask them how they would like to be corrected.

You can use your imagination and talent and have fun of course! The most successful performance I did this year was "Dishonored Boy". I work with the students from different groups. It took a month to prepare and put it before audience. My students had got a great success in this play. They work very hard and they were very pleasantly surprised by the results!

Carefully designed and sequenced, the materials and activities in this package aim to:

- strengthen students' skills of understanding dramatic texts through reading and writing;
- enhance students' oral and listening skills by encouraging them to experiment with language in different roles and dramatic contexts;
- encourage students to give expression to imaginative ideas and exercise their creativity through script writing and dramatic performance; and raise students' awareness of how language is used to create effects

In conclusion we can say that the rationale behind the package is that students will have sample opportunities to enrich their English learning experience and extend a range of language abilities through exploring drama. Role-play is possible at elementary levels providing the students have been thoroughly prepared. Try to think through the language the students will need and make sure this language has been presented. Students may need the extra support of having the language on the board. I recently did a 'lost property office' role-play with elementary adults and we spent time beforehand drilling the structures the students would need to use. When the role-play began the students felt 'armed' with the appropriate language. At higher levels the students will not need so much support with the language but they will need time to get into the role.

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