

# THE MASK

&

# GAVEL



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### *Messages from the Editor and Coordinator*

#### **Philip Head (Editor, Speech, Drama, & Debate SIG Publications Chair)**

Welcome to the fifth volume of the *Mask & Gavel*. This issue features useful and thought-provoking articles to help educators incorporate speech, drama, and debate activities into their classroom. First, in this issue's Feature Article, **Matthew Barbee** presents a passionate defense of the benefits of drama as a language learning tool, along with several fun and practical ideas to get students engaged. Next, we have In The Classroom, where **James Carpenter** presents an example of how drama can be incorporated into an oral presentation framework as a means of collaboratively exploring complex topics. This is followed by our Conference Reports section, in which **Mary Nobuoka** relays Roehl Sybing's presentation of four useful activities to prepare students for oral presentations. Finally, we have Book Review, where **David Kluge** provides a thorough examination of *The Great Debate: An Introduction to Debate* by James Venema.

This issue of M&G marks my first as editor and I would like to take the opportunity to thank the other staff who kindly volunteered their time to review articles or assist with copy-editing and proofreading to ensure a quality publication that we can all be proud of. I would also like to thank the authors for sharing their ideas and for their patience during the publication process. I hope you enjoy reading these articles and find them as useful as I have.

#### **Vivian Bussinguer-Khavari (Speech, Drama, & Debate SIG Coordinator)**

With every edition of the *Mask & Gavel* we are able to experience an educational and exciting journey into the theoretical and practical use of speech, drama, and debate in the language classroom. Contributors to this fifth volume have shared valuable knowledge and the *Mask & Gavel* staff has once again put together an outstanding edition. I have no doubt you will enjoy this volume's content and feel motivated to incorporate its many suggestions into your next language course!



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# Feature Article

## Drama in the L2 Classroom: A Defense and Practicum

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### **Abstract**

*A case is made for the use and practice of drama and dramatic activities in order to engage students in the second language (L2) classroom. This article also attempts to clarify terms such as drama, theatre, and dramatic activities within a second language classroom context. In order to make the case for drama in the L2 classroom, well-established trends in contemporary pedagogy are presented. Coupled with Maley & Duff's benefits of drama in the L2 classroom, the overall intent of this article is to empower L2 instructors and give them the theoretical and practical tools to brave potentially hostile educational environments that may not be open to dramatic activities in the classroom. In short, while teachers may instinctively know the value and benefits of drama to their language learners, they may at times need to convince administrators, fellow teachers, and even themselves of the benefits.*

“**L**anguage teachers sometimes behave like the owners of large estates, putting up high walls round their territory and signs saying ‘No Trespassing.’ Drama is like the naughty child who climbs the high walls and ignores the ‘No Trespassing’ sign. It does not allow us to define our territory so exclusively—it forces us to take as our starting point *life* not language . . . all that is needed is a roomful of human beings.” (Maley & Duff, 1978, p.10)

Indeed, drama is a transformative, human-making activity (Via, 1976, 1987; Zafeiriadou, 2009), with the potential to affect personalities, adjust codes of behavior (Hismanoglu, 2005; Livingstone, 1983), and mold autonomy as individuals (Barnes, 1968). At the heart of every teacher is an individual that yearns to engage in this *human-making* activity—activity that breaches the icy world of standardized testing, activity that breaks down the cinder-block structures of traditional Methods, activity that engages students rather than *telling them*. It is for this reason that I defend drama as a resource in the language classroom. According to Via (1987), “Few would disagree that drama has at last established itself as a means of helping people learn another language. A great deal of everyday learning is acquired through experience, and in the language classroom drama fulfills that experiential need” (p.110), and yet not all educators or school administrations are convinced.

As teachers, we often find ourselves in schools, offices, and positions that encourage teaching to the test and/or strict adherence to a top-down form of curriculum where teachers and the individual needs of students are the last to be considered. I have personally found myself in several types of environments, some where I didn’t feel free to be creative or to engage students in individualized and custom lessons, and some where I had too much freedom. In my experience, in this tale of two classrooms, this first type of administration set strict standards and planned curriculum day-by-day, minute-by-minute. Teachers had no freedom to create personal lesson plans, and instruction was based on standardized summative evaluations. Here, I knew where I stood because someone told me. I could introduce drama to supplement materials, but the lesson and testing schedule was so tight, it was difficult to plan anything extracurricular. While the administration encouraged creativity, there just wasn’t time.

In the second type of administration that I have experienced, very few standards were set across the curriculum. Teachers had full freedom to create all lessons plans, activities, tests, and materials, where formative evaluations were based on direct teacher instruction. Here, I knew where I stood because I had to plan everything on my own. However, while I was free to be creative because of the hands-off nature of the department, the management style of the senior staff was to check our syllabi and lesson plans well into a term after said lessons had already been implemented. At this school, I was told directly that dramatic activities were unproductive and did not have the *appearance* of being academic enough; I was told directly not to “play games.”

In such environments, what is the drama-loving, language teacher to do? Sometimes, in order to convince administration staff, other teachers, and even themselves, they often need to see the benefits in black and white and be given the tools to put them into practice. Ultimately, the intent in this article is tri-fold: to a) promote the theoretical benefits of using drama in today’s communicative, learner-centered second language classrooms, b) synthesize the differing opinions of scholars and show what is meant by such terms as drama, theatre, and dramatic activities, and c) present a few practical, dramatic activities that I have used successfully in my own English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom.

## **Theoretical Defense of Drama**

First, there is no question as to whether drama would benefit a language classroom. This can be seen by paralleling the known benefits of drama with modern language learning theories. In answer to the question, why is drama important in today’s language classroom, turn immediately to Maley and Duff (1978, 2011) and their quintessential *Drama Techniques for Language*

*Learning.* To summarize, Maley and Duff put forth eleven benefits of drama in the L2 classroom. Those benefits can be seen below:

**Benefits of Drama in the L2 Classroom**

1. Integrates the four language skills in authentic ways: Careful listening and spontaneous verbal expression is integral.
2. Integrates verbal and non-verbal aspects of communication. [physical and intellectual]
3. Integrates cognitive and affective domains. [feeling and thinking]
4. Contextualizes language through a focus on meaning.
5. Presents opportunities for catering to learner differences; holistic.
6. Fosters self-awareness (and awareness of others), self-esteem, and confidence.
7. Fosters motivation and sustains it through variety and the unpredictable nature of drama.
8. Transfers the responsibility for learning from teacher to learners.
9. Encourages an open, exploratory, and risk-taking environment where creativity and imagination can develop.
10. Positively affects classroom dynamics and atmosphere.
11. Is low resource. “For the most part, all you need is a ‘roomful of human beings.’”

These benefits have not only influenced my lesson plans and curricular objectives, they have also served as points of discussion when convincing administrators and other teachers that using drama in the classroom is more than just “playing around.” In fact, I keep a copy of them on my work desk and often refer back to them when the need arises.

In accordance with the listed benefits of drama above, Nina Spada’s (2007) definitive work on Communicative Language Teaching, CLT, validates drama as pedagogy in the second language (L2) classroom. According to Spada, CLT is “a meaning-based, learner-centered approach to L2 teaching where fluency is given priority over accuracy and the emphasis is on the comprehension and production of messages, *not* the teaching or correction of language form” (p. 272). The learner becomes an active participant in the language learning and teachers are expected to develop activities to promote self-learning, group interaction in real situations and peer-teaching.

Also central to Spada’s work is that “language proficiency is not a unitary concept but consists of several different components” (Spada, 2007, p. 273), including linguistic competence, pragmatic knowledge, the socio-linguistic appropriateness of language, and strategic competence. Drama accounts for all the components of communicative language pedagogy listed above, and teachers and administrations would be remiss not to notice the similarities between the benefits of drama and the needs of a communicative language classroom. That said, it is my belief that most L2 teachers already use drama or dramatic activities to promote authentic L2 communication in their classrooms.

## **What is Drama?**

Whichever term is used, drama, theatre, or dramatic activities, most people have a sense of what is being referred to. In essence, drama is art that communicates feelings and emotions, thoughts and concerns through performance. It is the participants themselves, originating from the very beginnings of human interaction, that constitute the medium of drama. And yet, even with this understanding, debate continues about the meaning of the three terms

## **Drama**

As defined by Via (1987), *drama* is “communication between people” (p. 110) that conveys meaning. According to Susan Holden (1981), drama cannot be separated from the idea of ‘let’s pretend;’ “it asks the learner to project himself imaginatively into another situation, outside the classroom, or into the skin and persona of another person” (p. 1), where focus is put on “*doing* rather than on the presentation” (p. 8). She goes on to say that drama cannot be separated from interaction with other people and that it must include the communication of meaning. Usually drama is interaction between two or more participants without an audience. Most scholars agree that it is drama that most often makes an appearance in the classroom, as it is process rather than product that is the focus of drama (as opposed to other language pedagogies that place product over process) (Zafeiriadou, 2009).

## **Theatre**

As opposed to drama, which lacks communication with an audience, theatre is just that; it is communication with the audience’s presence in mind (Holden, 1981; Via, 1976). According to Via (1987), *theatre* is “communication between people for the benefit of other people, which includes play production” (p. 110). And, like drama, Via goes on to say that theatre must also convey meaning, “among the performers and between the performers and the audience” (p. 110). Scholars are indeed divided on the function of drama versus theatre in the classroom. Much of the reason for this divide is due to the debate over what makes up a *dramatic activity*. Must it lead to the stage with its memorized and recited lines or can process, as an end in itself, be just as or more effective in the classroom? That is certainly a question for individual teachers to decide and further research.

## **Dramatic Activity**

While Via (1987) is somewhat vague on the subject, he defines *dramatic activities* as “strategies to achieve either drama or theatre” (p. 110). Maley and Duff (1978), on the other hand, are very clear in what they mean by dramatic activities:

They are activities which give the student an opportunity to use his own personality in creating the material on which the language class is to be based. These activities draw on the natural ability of every person to imitate, mimic and express himself through gesture. They draw, too, on his imagination and memory. . . They are dramatic because they arouse our interest, which they do by drawing on the unpredictable power generated when one person is brought together with others. Each student brings a different life, a different background into the class. (1978, p. 1)

They then go on to say what dramatic activities are *not*: putting on plays in front of a passive audience, rote memorization of lines which “lose their savor even before they are spoken” (p. 1), nor are they, according to Maley and Duff, the process that leads up to some final performance, claiming that the value of drama in the classroom lies in process above product. Via (1976) disagrees, claiming that the ownership that comes from rehearsing and presenting a play is valuable for students: “a play can give students a reason to use language” (p. 6) and “students with a definite, interesting goal progress faster and further” (p. 7).



Two categories of dramatic activity encompass most of the drama seen in classrooms: simulation and role-playing. While they are very similar and can be defined in relation to each other, they are separate techniques that elicit very different output from students.

### **Dramatic Activities in the Classroom**

It is my belief that while teachers already use drama and dramatic activities in their classrooms, they may not always be aware that that is what they are doing. For some of us, the following dramatic activities may be common place in our teaching, but for others, I would like to give you a few practical examples of how I use drama in my classroom. As for my background, I currently teach EFL writing, communication, and reading to university students in Japan. My particular program requires an English for science purposes curriculum and the students are not segregated by English proficiency. For the most part, this means that my students did not choose to directly study English and that their English levels range from false beginner to high-intermediate. Below, are practical lessons for several types of dramatic activities that have been successful in my own classes from the well-known simulation and role-playing activities to perhaps lesser-known teacher-in-role, role-reversal, and thought-tracking activities.

### ***Simulation***

Simulations are dramatic, communicative activities that ask students to solve a problem or perform a task together, i.e., task-based language teaching. The setting and type of problem closely simulate an experience students may face in everyday life or require them to ponder a larger issue as they work together to achieve a consensus or solve the central problem. In simulations, students bring their own opinions to the table and represent their own motivations and attitudes about the problem (Livingstone, 1983; Via, 1987). The following are three simulation activities that I have used in my classroom.

### ***Marshmallow Challenge***

The Marshmallow Challenge can be done with language learners of any level. In groups, students have 18 minutes to build the tallest freestanding tower using only four items: 20 pieces of spaghetti, one-meter of tape, one-meter of string, and one marshmallow. Other rules are that the marshmallow must remain in one piece, the height of the tower will be measured from the table to the top of the marshmallow, and when time is up students cannot be holding the tower. Students can be seen building their towers in the Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1. Students working on Marshmallow Challenge**



### *Lost*

Students form groups and are told that each group is stranded on a deserted island. Each group is given a handout (see Appendix 1) with pictures of possible survival items. Each group must discuss their situation and debate which four items would be best to have on their deserted island. (Note: Not all deserted islands have to be the same.) Groups then separate and defend their choices to members from other groups. In the new dispersed groups, students debate which is the number one survival item.

### *Zombie Outbreak*

Like *Lost* above, groups also debate and choose four survival items from a handout (see Appendix 2) that would best help them survive. However, this time they are not on a deserted island, but rather in the middle of a zombie outbreak. Once the top four items have been chosen, group members choose one survival item each and separate around the room meeting other survivors and discussing which survival item is best.

### *Build-A-Nation*

In groups, students create original countries. Each group has several tasks: a) create maps of their countries including the infrastructure, i.e., roads, facilities, ports, etc., b) create a list of freedoms and laws c) write a credo, and d) decide the main industries and exports of their country. Teams then create a visual aid of their country, present their countries to the class, and discuss the possibilities of trade, forming alliances, and even the prospect of war.

In the simulations above, while each scenario may be manufactured classroom scenarios, students still remain themselves. Other than a new setting and task, students are not given new personas nor asked to portray different characters. Their motivations, however, may change based on each scenario. This is where drama and authentic opportunities for language are created.

### **Role-playing**

On the other hand, while role-playing is closely related to simulation activities, it instead asks students to take on the roles of characters other than themselves with motivations, attitudes, and feelings matching those new characters. In role-playing, “each student would be given particular information about his role” (Livingstone, 1983, p. 1) in the form of a role-playing scenario. Like many teachers, I have used examples of role-playing in many of my communication classes. I recently taught a lesson that involved business and work-related readings and vocabulary. In addition to the standard curriculum, I put students into groups and gave them the following role-playing scenarios where they were asked to take on attitudes and characterizations other than their own. Each scenario also included a given phrase that each group was required to use in their scene.

#### ***Business and Work Role-Playing Scenarios:***

- 1) You are in a business meeting. One of you is the boss, one of you is giving a presentation, and one of you is causing a problem—maybe several problems. What are the problems and how are they solved? (Required Phrase: What is happening here?)
- 2) You are workers in a factory; one of you is the boss. The boss asks you to work overtime, but you cannot. Do you lie or will you be honest? How do you get out of work? (Required Phrase: I don’t know what to believe.)
- 3) One of you is a customer service representative. The other members are customers with complaints or problems. What are the problems and how do you solve them? Are you rude or polite? Maybe one customer is VERY angry. (Required Phrase: I’m doing the best I can.)

In another class, a university reading class, the topic of the reading and vocabulary was on gender roles and family life. The following are role-play scenarios that I used to reinforce the themes and elicit English language use similar to that in the unit.

#### ***Gender Roles and Family Role-Playing Scenarios:***

- 1) You and your partner have been together for 3 years. You want to get married. You arrive at your parent’s house and tell them the news. What is their reaction? Also, your parents have some surprising news. What happens?
- 2) You are at an *onsen* OR coffee shop with your best friends. You and your friends are talking about relationships. One of your friends comes out as gay...and reveals that he/she likes you. You have a very strong reaction at first. What do your other friends do? Is it difficult to be honest with each other?
- 3) You and your child are at the park. If your child is a boy, he wants to play with dolls. If your child is a girl, she wants to play with guns and trucks. BUT another parent takes away your child’s toys and tells you that it is wrong. How do you act? What do you say to them? The other parent is very loud. Bystanders decide to enter the conversation.

In addition to acting out these scenarios, groups are instructed to include related vocabulary words in their scenes, practice so that delivery can be more natural, and perform their scenes in front of the class. This progression from in-group improvisation to performance would be an example of moving from dramatic activity to theatre, which is discussed in more detail below.

It should be noted here that the definitions of simulation and role-playing are reversed according to Holden (1981), are upheld by Maley and Duff (1978), and rejected as not having value by Bolton (1992). First of all, Bolton finds the terms simulation and role-play to be synonymous, and second of all, tells us that “[they have] little to do with dramatic art, where children take on roles in order to assimilate facts or develop behavior skills” (p. 111). He goes on to say that this is because the learner’s focus is so involved in the function of language that it cannot be taken seriously as drama. In rejecting the terms under his definition, Bolton (1992) seems to make a case for why they, in fact, should be included as dramatic activities in L2 classrooms where language should be the focus. Other forms of dramatic activities include teacher-in-role, role-reversal, and thought-tracking as seen below.

### ***Teacher-in-Role***

In teacher-in-role activities, it is the teacher’s job to adopt a character or role in order to stimulate action. For this activity, instead of giving students a specific situation and motivation, the students are instead encouraged to adopt complimentary roles of their own in relation to the teacher’s example. This technique should be purposeful with the intention of eliciting desired language from the students. It also has the potential to level the playing field between teacher and students while placing power in the hands of the students. Teacher-in-role scenarios include:

- 1) The teacher takes the role of a homeless person, students take the roles of passersby. This scene could explore how society reacts to, or should react to, others.
- 2) The teacher takes the role of a landlord who wants to close an apartment building as it is getting old and some apartments will be too expensive to repair without going broke. The students adopt roles as tenants.
- 3) The teacher takes the role of a tourist who cannot speak the native language of the students and speaks very little English. The teacher wants to do something or go somewhere, while the students try to help by communicating anyway they know how.

### ***Role-Reversal***

In role-reversal, the teacher chooses a moment in the scene to pause the action. During this moment, students take on opposite roles perhaps with lower or higher status, a different perspective, or a different job. Role-reversal is effective in examining social interaction, relationships, and character motivations. In my writing classes, teacher-in-role and role-reversal activities have been very helpful as a pre-writing strategy for argumentative and compare/contrast essays where students are required to take on controversial issues. In my higher level communication classes, they have served as good warmups to more formal debates. Scenarios I have used successfully have included:

- 1) In a drama about bullying, half the students take the role of bully and half take the role of victim. During the action, the roles would reverse.
- 2) In a drama about fishing or whaling practices, the students first take the role of whalers or fishermen who need the ocean to survive. Half-way through the action, the scene stops, and they then take on the roles of marine conservationists who will stop at nothing to protect the oceans and its sea life.

- 3) In a drama about a bomb found near a train station, students first take the role of people who must flee the area. They then become either counselors or police officers who must stay calm under pressure.

### ***Thought-Tracking***

Thought-tracking involves students expressing a character's unscripted, inner thoughts while in the role of that character. For thought-tracking to work, the teacher pauses the drama and selects one student while he or she is in character. That student then expresses what that character is really thinking. For example, the character may have different intentions beyond what is actually written in the script or text, such as "I feel scared, but I must be strong" or "I love him, but I wish he would stop talking." The teacher may also ask direct questions to elicit desired language or focus the action. This type of activity has proved very useful in my reading classes. One very successful lesson asked students to express the thoughts of Marie Curie as she won her second Nobel prize and of Masatoshi Koshiba as he proved the existence of neutrinos for the first time. It has been my experience that the cold reading of a text is always enhanced by thought-tracking activities. For the students, meaning is contextualized and characters are brought to life.

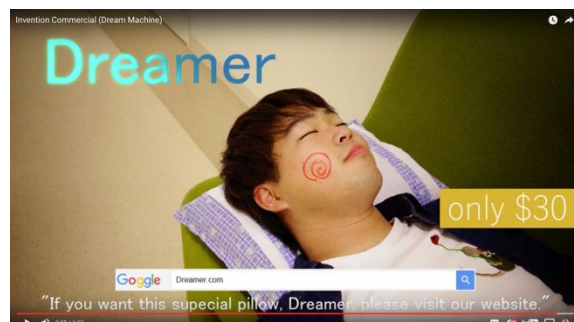
### **Theatre in the Classroom**

As mentioned above, dramatic activities are activities that engage students in drama for their own sake, without an audience, fourth wall intact. On the other hand, theatre is just the opposite, drama for the sake of an audience. In essence, drama that focuses on product over process. However, theatre does not always mean producing a full-scale theatrical event. In my classroom for example, while I have produced fully staged plays and musicals with proper rehearsals and costumes, time for such lessons is hard to come by and they are rare. More often I have students write scripts, rehearse, and memorize dramatic scenes that began as simple improvised dramatic activities. One of the most successful examples of product-based drama that I have used in my university-level English communication classes asks students to first imagine and design original inventions (Appendices 3a & 3b). After brainstorming, planning, and script-writing, each group of students then produces a one-minute commercial for their original invention (Appendices 4a & 4b). In effect, students use descriptive and persuasive language to promote and sell an original product using video-making technology and software (see Figures 2 and 3 below), an example of computer assisted language learning (CALL). Exemplary student-made commercials from this lesson can be seen on my homepage at: <http://www.matthewbarbee.com/student-video-projects.html>.

Figure 2. Student sample ad 1



Figure 3. Student sample ad 2



Perhaps surprisingly, I have also used theatre in my TOEIC preparation classes. A handout for this lesson can be seen in Appendix 5. In this lesson, students already had department-wide TOEIC listening textbooks that were required for the class. While listening tests and quizzes from the textbook were also mandatory, I supplemented that instruction with role-playing activities that used vocabulary and themes from each unit. Beyond role-playing and conversation practice, students were further asked to formalize scripts using the new vocabulary, rehearse scenes, and perform them for the whole class the following week. Because English listening skills were also an objective of this class, each group of students also produced three TOEIC-like comprehension questions after their performance. During the performances, students in the audience were to listen carefully, take notes, and answer questions much like the format of the *short conversations* section, section 3, of current TOEIC listening tests. Exemplary student-made commercials from this lesson can be seen on my homepage at:

<http://www.matthewbarbee.com/role-playing-lessons--videos.html>

## Conclusion

Overall, drama works in conjunction with established curriculum, gives students a virtual experience in authentic discourse, and engages students within the language classroom. Bang (2003) writes that drama ultimately gives students “more opportunities to interact directly with the target language—to acquire it by using it rather than to learn it by studying it” (p. 2). It is the multidimensional aspect of the L2 classroom that begs for such a multidimensional approach to teaching; and it is drama that meets those needs. Drama—drama, theatre, dramatic activities—whether confined to the classroom or allowed to flow onto a stage, is ready to be treated as a staple in the L2 classroom.

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**[Editor's note: This article is based on the presentation that won Matthew the 2015 Best of JALT award for the Speech, Drama, and Debate SIG.]**



## Appendices

### Appendix 1

**YOU ARE STRANDED ON A DESERTED ISLAND,  
YOU CAN CHOOSE 4 OF THE FOLLOWING...**

				
TARP	SUNSCREEN	TOILET PAPER	POT	IPOD
				
HIKING BOOTS	HAND SAW	FLARE GUN	INFLATABLE RAFT	FLASHLIGHT
				
INSECT REPELLENT	HAMMOCK	COMPASS	MIRROR	VITAMINS
				
WATER PURIFIER	FISHING ROD	ROPE	HUNTING RIFLE	BIBLE
				
FIRST AID KIT	TENT	KNIFE	MATCHES	VOLLEYBALL



**Appendix 2**

**A ZOMBIE OUTBREAK HAS JUST OCCURRED.  
YOU CAN PICK 4 OF THE FOLLOWING TO  
BEGIN YOUR JOURNEY OF SURVIVAL.**



Body Armour



Crossbow



Flashlight



First Aid Kit



Machete



Chainsaw



Water Purifier



German Shephard



Shotgun



Fire Axe



Two-Man Tent



Video Camera



AK-47



Respirator Mask



Motorcycle



Jeep



CB Radio



Night Vision Goggles



Silenced Hand  
Gun



Katana

## Appendix 3a

# Create Your Own Invention

Group Members:

**Assignment:** In your group, you will work together to design a new invention and create a commercial (CM) to sell your invention. This worksheet will be due at the beginning of class next week. Please complete one worksheet per group with all group member's name on it.

**Creativity is a must! Do not create an invention that already exists.**

## A. Brainstorming

One of the best ways to collect ideas for developing an innovation or invention is to brainstorm with a team. Follow the instructions below to generate some ideas for an original invention in your group.



1. Think of simple products, machines, or devices in your life now. Make a list of everyday inventions that make life more convenient or better than it was in the past. **Simple is best.** (Example: screw-top bottles, zipper, remote control, portable battery for cell phone, etc.)

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

2. Think about your life at home, work, school, etc. What are some problems you would like to solve?

- At home: \_\_\_\_\_
- At work: \_\_\_\_\_
- At school: \_\_\_\_\_
- (        ): \_\_\_\_\_

3. Now, brainstorm a list of possible new inventions with your group. List all ideas and make notes about what they do.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 3b**

Group Members:

### **B. Developing your Invention**

*As a group, choose one of the inventions from the list above. Draw a picture or make a diagram of your invention!*



1. What did your group invent? What is the name of your invention?
2. What does your invention do? Describe your invention and explain how it works.
3. What is the problem you hope to solve with your invention? How does your invention make life better or more convenient than the past?
4. **Marketability:** Who would use or buy this product? How much does it cost? Where can you buy it?
5. What descriptive words would you use to describe this product? Write 3 below.  
(Ex: exciting, new, high-tech, cutting-edge, fastest, compact, cheapest, etc.)

## Appendix 4a

# Make an Invention Commercial

Group Members:

**Assignment:** Make a one-minute commercial (CM) for your invention and present it to the class. The commercial must be a video or live action commercial. You can either perform it live in class or make a video and play it for the class.

### Sample TOEIC Part 4 radio commercial:

Hey guys. Are you having trouble sleeping at night? I was too, until I discovered Snoozers. I'd tried everything – pills, tea, counting sheep – but nothing was working for me. Then a friend introduced me to Snoozers, an amazing, fast-acting medication that worked the first time I tried it, and has kept on working to give me the rest I deserve. Snoozers is an all-natural, herbal remedy that interacts naturally with your body, leaving you relaxed and ready to lay down and sleep. Just one teaspoonful, mixed with warm water, is all you need to ensure a good night's rest. Just \$9.99 a bottle or you can try it today for free! For a limited time, you can get a free sample by calling 1-888-666-5454. That's 1-888-666-5454. Take it from me, Pat O'Donnell, Snoozers works! Don't spend another night thrashing and turning. Call 1-888-666-5454 for your free Snoozers sample now!

## Planning the Commercial

**Step 1:** Decide on whether you will make a video or live commercial. Will you record it or perform it live?

**Note:** Please make sure that your video formatting will work before class starts.

Problems with technology are no excuse for not completing the assignment in class.

Please download your video file and test it on a classroom computer before class.



**Step 2:** Write a script for your commercial using advertising language.

1. What is it?
2. What can it do?
3. How does it make life easier and more convenient?
4. Where can you buy it? Who should buy it?
5. How much does it cost?
6. **USE** descriptive words that make people want to buy it:
  - 3 adjectives: new, modern, clean, compact, etc.
  - 1 compound adjective (hyphen): top-quality, high-tech, economy-size, feather-light, longer-lasting, chocolate-flavored, etc.
  - 1 superlative: best, fastest, cheapest, most effective, greatest, etc.

Script:

## Appendix 4b

**Step 3:** Submit your script to the teacher before your presentation for editing.

---

### **Presentation Day (Week 4):**

**Step 1:** 20 minutes to practice your commercial with your group or prepare your video.

**Step 2:** Perform or play your commercial.

**Step 3:** After your commercial, please shortly explain your answers to the following questions to the class.

1. What did you invent?	
2. Who is your target audience? Old, young, teenagers...?	
3. What kind of language do you use in the commercial to make people want to buy it?	
4. What difficulties did you encounter when designing the commercial?	
5. What skills do you think you have learned from this challenging activity?	

**Step 4:** Submit a final written copy of your script. Put all the names of the group members on the sheet.

### **Presentation Grading Criteria**

- Each member speaks and participates /5
- The presentation is of an original invention/creative /5
- Group is clearly prepared for the presentation /5
- The commercial is 1 minute in length /5
- The commercial uses advertising language  
(at least 3 adjectives, 1 compound adjective, and 1 superlative) /5
- Questions after performing the commercial /5
- English fluency: grammar and pronunciation /5
- **Overall effectiveness of Commercial (Do I want to buy?)** /5

**Total: /40**



## Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Class** [C++](#) [C#](#) [Java](#) [JavaScript](#) [PHP](#) [Python](#) [Ruby](#) [TypeScript](#)

**TOPICS:**

Project 1: 電磁気学に関する基礎

- **Resort Area:** Have a nice, relaxing time.

## Points: 1000/1000 (100%)

- **Directions:** Could you please tell me how to get to the store.

## Points: 089674228 / 100000

- go straight down (直下) from left of A (左側); A is your right (右側)  
in front of A (前方); next to A (隣接); opposite A (反対側) behind A (背後)  
in front of A (前方) between A and B (AとBの間); around the corner (隅回り)  
at C; at the end of the corridor (廊の端); along the street (通り沿い)  
A (Aの側); away from A (遠くから) (Aから遠くへ)

■ **Job Experience:** Do you have a part-time job?

**Patient:** 800-869-8700; 800-869-8700

- job (n) 职位 (zhìwèi); applicant (n) 应聘者 (bǐnshēng); resume / CV (noun) 简历 (jiǎnlì); candidate (n) 应聘者 (bǐnshēng); position (n) 职位 (zhìwèi); supervisor (n) 上司 (shàngsī); condition / term (n) 条件 (tiáojiàn); occupation (n) 职业 (zhíyè); profession (n) 职业 (zhíyè); Personnel (Human Resources) Department (n) 人力资源部 (rénwù zhuānyè); for (prep) 为 (wéi); apply for (v) 申请 (shēnqǐng); to be transferred to A (to transfer), to be in charge of A (to be in charge)

### ■ Summer Sale: Are you a bargain hunter?

## Point 1. 個人・個人に課する金銭的負担

- [illegible]

\* Vocabulary was taken from *Practical Situations for the TOEIC Test Listening (2010)*. Content has been blurred due to Copyright restrictions

# In the Classroom

## Incorporating Drama into EFL Oral Presentations

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### **Abstract**

*Oral presentations are common in many English as a foreign language (EFL) classes. Because oral presentations entail multiple steps, they are ideal for project-based learning courses. Yet, it can be challenging for students to meaningfully collaborate on oral presentation projects using English. The use of drama in oral presentations allows students to explore more complex topics without being overwhelmed. A short survey of the literature related to oral presentations and project-based learning in EFL is presented in this article. Then, the basic discourse for oral presentations in English is discussed, followed by an expanded discussion about how drama can simplify this discourse for students. Finally, two examples of student presentations are presented.*

Oral presentations are widely used in English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms. This is partly because the task of preparing for and performing an oral presentation integrates the four macro language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) (Al-Issa & Al-Qubtan, 2010). In addition, creating an oral presentation in a second language aligns with Ellis' (2003) definition of language learning tasks as "activities that call for meaning-focused language use" (p.3). The use of such language-learning tasks arises from educational, linguistic, and philosophical traditions of experiential, communicative, and student-centered learning (Nunan, 2014). Therefore, the use of oral presentations in the EFL classrooms is both pedagogically supported by and appropriately situated in current best practices in language teaching.

### **Oral Presentations in Japan**

In Japan, oral presentations of one form or another are common in primary, secondary, and higher education EFL classrooms. In many cases, such oral presentations take the form of inter-school, municipal or regional speech contests (Shannon, 2014). These contests evaluate a variety of

different language related outcomes, including pronunciation, delivery, and composition. It is reasonable to say that oral presentations have become an important part of EFL education in Japan.

## **Eikaiwa-zation of EFL Classes**

Arguably, oral presentations are becoming equally common in Japanese university EFL classrooms. As EFL education in Japan has changed over time, there has been an implicit shift towards the same pedagogical approaches used in Japanese private conversation schools (called *Eikaiwa*) (Rivers, 2013). This “eikaiwa-zation” of university EFL classes is characterized by an emphasis on “authentic” interaction (most often with a so-called “native speaking” English teacher) where fun and the use of English as a pathway to student enjoyment are primary (Rivers, 2013). This is practically expressed by a lack of well-defined curricular objectives in Japanese university EFL programs that results in a high degree of teacher freedom. It is anecdotally apparent that having students prepare and present oral presentations is a popular way to focus an “eikaiwa-zised” university course.

Yet, an oral presentation is only pedagogically sound if the process for creating the presentation is linguistically and educationally rich. From an educational standpoint, the process of creating the oral presentation is as important as the final presentation itself. Tuan and Neomy (2007) conducted a small study investigating how student preparation time influenced the form and content of their final presentations in an EFL class at a university in Vietnam. While preliminary, their study suggested that student planning time did play a significant role in the quality of the final presentation. This reinforces the point that delivering the final oral presentation is not the student’s only EFL task. Rather, the presentation is the culmination of a series of language learning tasks.

A series of language tasks culminating in a final project falls under the rubric of project-based learning (PBL) (Nunan, 2014). The creation of an oral presentation fits well as the content for PBL because oral presentations require an equal commitment to both language skills and content knowledge (Stoller, 2008).

## **Language Skills for Oral Presentations**

Shannon (2013) provides examples of how language skills are assessed in municipal speech contests in Japan. These skills include “pronunciation,” “delivery,” and “composition.” Based on the examples provided by Shannon (2013), the “language skills” in such oral presentations primarily evaluate how well students can use their English in the appropriate discourse of an oral presentation. This paper assumes the definition for discourse first proposed by Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000):

A piece of discourse is an instance of spoken or written language with describable internal relationships of form and meaning (e.g. words, structures, cohesion) that relate coherently to an external communicative function or purpose and a given audience or interlocutor. (p. 4).



In the case of oral presentations, the external communicative function or purpose of the language to be used is the presentation itself. The internal relationships of form and meaning refer to the vocabulary associated with the presentation topic, and the grammar and textual organizational features necessary to present that topic in English. This paper proposes that short dramas can be used to simplify basic oral presentation discourse in order to make the process of creating oral presentation projects more accessible to EFL students.

## **The Discourse of Oral Presentations in English**

There is an abundant literature outlining the discourse of oral presentations. While not the final authority on such discourse, the literature published by Toastmasters International provides a useful framework for organizing a presentation. Toastmasters International is an organization with the stated mission of “empower[ing] individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders” (Toastmasters, 2016). Toastmasters is a speech club that gives its members the opportunity to practice giving speeches on a variety of topics and in a variety of formats. *Competent Communication*, the introductory manual given to all new Toastmasters members provides a detailed speech outline presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Competent Communication Presentation Outline

Opening
Captures audience attention
Leads into speech topic
Body
<u>Main point</u>
Sub-point
Sub-point material
<u>Main point</u>
Sub-point
Sub-point material
<u>Main point</u>
Sub-point
Sub-point material
Conclusion
Review or summary
Call to action or memorable statement

Generally, this outline for a speech is similar to that of a five-paragraph essay. The introduction serves to draw the audience in and introduce the topic. The topic is then expanded upon through the explication of at least three main points. The presentation ends with a summary of these three main points and a final comment. For the purposes of this paper, the most important aspect of Figure 1 is in the explication of the three main points. Each of these three main points must first be defined clearly for the audience (via its attendant (i.) sub-points), and then each of these sub-points must be further explained through direct explication or with examples (via the attendant (ii.) sub-point material).

## **Use of L1 in Oral Presentation Preparation**

The task for teachers and students in a PBL class using oral presentations is to divide this outline into a series of smaller language tasks that culminate in the final presentation. As Ford and Kluge (2015) have noted, the challenge of making the planning process for any PBL course into a meaningful opportunity to practice foreign language skills is an ongoing challenge for PBL teachers. Simply put, EFL students inevitably prefer to prepare for their foreign language projects using their first language. Yet, as noted by Tuan and Neomy (2007) above, such planning time is an essential part of preparing for oral presentations and has a direct impact on the quality of the final presentation itself. Therefore, helping students to meaningfully use English while preparing their project is critical.

There are many reasons why EFL students lapse into their first language during planning time in PBL classes. To begin with, PBL classes are by their very nature more open and flexible classes (Stoller, 2006) that potentially require students to marshal more of their own cognitive and creative resources than when completing scaffolded, highly controlled activities in typical EFL textbooks. In addition, as research into bilingualism has pointed out (e.g. Garcia & Wei, 2014), bilingual or multi-lingual people will naturally seek to make use of the most effective and efficient linguistic resources available to them at a given time. Therefore, when faced with the difficult challenge of creating an oral presentation from scratch, most students will naturally opt for the most efficient method of communication available to them in an EFL classroom: their first language. It is necessary, therefore, for teachers to provide a model for oral presentation discourse that allows students to express as much as they can at their current second language proficiency level without overloading them to the point that they inevitably switch to their first language.

Using drama can help simplify oral presentation discourse in this way. The body of the presentation is a natural place to incorporate drama into basic oral presentation discourse. One way of doing this is to present short dramas instead of examples when explaining the sub-points of a given topic.

## **Drama in Presentation Discourse**

The creation of a drama is in and of itself a linguistically challenging task (Kawakami, 2012), yet collaborating on the best way to express an idea through a story can allow students to more easily make use of the foreign language resources available to them. This is in part because stories are easier for our brains to process than expository text (Kelly, 2011). Building off of the speech outline given in Table 1, Table 2 below provides an expanded presentation outline that includes drama as part of the discourse.

Table 2. Expanded Presentation Outline

Opening
Give the title of the presentation
Introduce the topic
List three reasons why the topic is important.
Present the main message of the presentation, and give the three main points that support this message.
Body

Main Point

Restate the first main point.

Define the first main point clearly for the audience.

Present a short drama with a clear beginning, middle, and end that exemplifies the first main point.

Explain the takeaway message of the drama to the audience.

Main Point

Restate the second main point.

Define the second main point clearly for the audience.

Present a short drama with a clear beginning, middle, and end that exemplifies the second main point.

Explain the takeaway message of the drama to the audience.

Main Point

Restate the third main point.

Define the third main point clearly for the audience.

Present a short drama with a clear beginning, middle, and end that exemplifies the third main point.

Explain the takeaway message of the drama to the audience.

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Conclusion

Paraphrase main message.

Revise or summarize main points

---

As Table 2 indicates, rather than explain and give examples of the main points of the presentation through straight exposition, it can be more effective to have students provide a clear definition of their main point and then represent that main point through a short drama for their audience. Then, students can explain the meaning or significance of the drama as it relates to their presentation topic. Appendix 1 provides a detailed model of one way the outline presented in Table 2 can be applied in a PBL course using oral presentations.

## **Student Examples**

Two examples of student work using the model in Appendix 1 are presented below. The first example (Example 1) is a series of excerpts taken from one group of students' oral presentation script with explanation and commentary. The second example (Example 2) is an entire script of a different group's oral presentation project, presented in Appendix 2. These examples came from student projects in a Freshman English course at a university in Japan. This Freshman English course is required for all students admitted to each of the university's five main academic units—Business, Law, Economics, International Relations, and Urban Innovation. The average language level of the students whose work is presented here is either A2 ("elementary") or B1 ("intermediate") on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Example 1 given below came from the Business department. (See Appendix 2 for a second example from the Economics department).

### **Example 1**

The Opening from Example 1's oral presentation is presented in Table 3 below:

Table 3. Presentation Example 1 Introduction

Opening
<p>Hello! Our presentation is called Love &amp; Peace.</p> <p>Our topic is terrorism.</p> <p>We think this topic is important because:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Today, terrorism is a major problem in the world.</li> <li>2. Terrorism could happen in Japan at any time.</li> <li>3. We don't know how to protect our country.</li> </ol> <p>We believe we can be protected from terrorism through reinforcement.</p> <p>We can do this through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Counter measures</li> <li>2. Learning about history</li> <li>3. Helping other countries</li> </ol>

The topic of Example 1's presentation was international terrorism. In addition to explaining the title, topic, and some background on that topic, this introduction gives the main message ("We believe we can be protected from terrorism through reinforcement") and the three main points that expand upon this message ("counter measures," "learning about history," and "helping other countries"). In the presentation itself, these three main points will be primarily explained through drama and not through direct exposition.

As Table 1 and Table 2 above indicate, the "Body" of a presentation defines, explains, and gives examples of the main points of the presentation's message. Table 4 below presents the body portion of Example 1's presentation for the first main point listed in their introduction ("counter measures").

Table 4. Presentation Example 1 Main Point 1

Main Point 1
<p>Counter measure means solutions. For example, we should not allow terrorists to enter our country, so we should do training because we should prepare for terrorism.</p>
<p><i>Narrator = N:</i> This is Narita Airport. The man wants to enter Japan. Then two inspectors checked his baggage.</p> <p><i>Inspectors = I:</i> Please show us your baggage.</p> <p><i>Man = M:</i> I don't want to.</p> <p><i>I:</i> If you don't show us your baggage, you can't enter Japan.</p> <p><i>M:</i> Ok!</p> <p><i>I:</i> Look! This is a gun!</p> <p><i>N:</i> The police caught the man</p>
<p>The Olympics will be held in Japan, so terrorists may come here. So, we should check tourist's baggage more strictly, and we should prepare weapons and more. Finally, we can maintain safety in Japan.</p>

This first section in the body of Example 1's presentation provides a simple example of how drama can make oral presentation discourse in English more accessible for EFL students. First, it should be noted that international terrorism is a challenging topic for A2 or B1 level EFL students. While it is certainly possible for this level of student to express a basic understanding about a topic like this, it is well beyond their ability to collaborate deeply about such a topic using expository prose. Therefore, in example one, we see the students first provide a clear definition for the term "counter measures ("solutions") and then give a short example of what such countermeasures might look like ("not allow terrorists into the country," "training to prepare for terrorism"). Then, the presentation shifts to a drama that depicts a simple example of countermeasures at the airport. Finally, a short explanation about why such countermeasures are important for Japan is presented.

## Conclusion

The preparation for and final presentation of an oral presentation project is an opportunity for rich, meaningful collaboration using English. Yet, for such projects to be successful, it is necessary for teachers to make the preparation process as accessible as possible for students. Incorporating drama into oral presentation discourse can help students to collaborate meaningfully about a variety of topics, while making use of the language skills they have available to them.

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## **Appendices**

### ***Appendix 1 Oral Presentation Outline***

#### **I. Opening**

- a. Hello. Our presentation is called\_\_\_\_\_ (Title).
- b. Our topic is\_\_\_\_\_ (Topic)
- c. We think this topic is important because:
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Message:

We believe that\_\_\_\_\_ (problem) can/can be  
\_\_\_\_\_ (verb)\_by\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (solution).

We can do this by:

  1. \_\_\_\_\_ (Main Point 1).
  2. \_\_\_\_\_ (Main Point 2).
  3. \_\_\_\_\_ (Main Point 3).

#### **II. Body 1**

- a. First, we will talk about \_\_\_\_\_ (Main Point 1)
- b. Clear definition of Main Point 1  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c. Example
  1. Beginning

2. Middle

3. End

d. Explanation of the drama

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**III. Body 2**

a. First, we will talk about \_\_\_\_\_ (Main Point 2)

b. Clear definition of Main Point 2

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c. Example

4. Beginning



5. Middle

6. End

d. Explanation of the drama

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**IV. Body 3**

- a. First, we will talk about \_\_\_\_\_ (Main Point 3)
- b. Clear definition of Main Point 3

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c. Example

7. Beginning

8. Middle

9. End

d. Explanation of the drama

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**V. Conclusion**

a. Paraphrase message: \_\_\_\_\_

b. Review main points

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c. Final comment

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Thank you!

## **Appendix 2 Example 2 Oral Presentation**

### **1. Opening**

- a. Hello. Our presentation is called Maternity Harassment.
- b. Our topic is maternity harassment.
- c. We think this topic is important because:
  - 1. Maternity discrimination is a bad thing.
  - 2. Childcare is important.
  - 3. The falling birthrate in Japan makes us worried.
- d. Message:
  - We believe that maternity harassment can be solved by changes in social consciousness.
  - We can do this by:
    - 1. Consulting many people.
    - 2. Promoting better understanding.
    - 3. Cracking down on lawbreakers.

### **2. Body 1**

- a. Main Point 1: Consult many people.
- b. Consulting is important.
  - For example, women who are experiencing maternity harassment should consult with their family, their husband, their best friend or an adviser. We like consulting because it can make pregnant women feel better.
- c. Drama
  - 1. Beginning
    - Friend: Hello.
    - Maternity: Hi.
    - Friend: What are you doing? You look very worried.
    - Maternity: I... I'm going to have a child. I'm going to have a baby.
    - Friend: It is happy news! Why aren't you happy?
    - Maternity: The reason is my boss. He says that, "Pregnant women must leave this company." I feel shocked and angry.
  - 2. Middle
    - Friend: Go talk with an advisor.
    - Adviser: Hello. How can I help you?
  - 3. End
    - Friend: We have problem.
    - Maternity: My boss makes me unhappy.
    - Adviser: That is maternity harassment! Leave it to me! I can help you!

d. Explanation

When women are pregnant, they are very happy.  
But, they often have worries because of their careers.  
They should talk to a reliable person.  
So, they can reduce their worries.

**3. Body 2**

a. Main Point 2: Promote better understanding.

b. Understanding is important.

For example, if you have knowledge, you can help pregnant women.  
We like understanding because without knowledge you cannot do anything.

c. Drama

1. Beginning

Adviser: Excuse me?

Boss: What? Why have you come here?

Adviser: Our reason? We want to teach you about pregnant women's situation!

Pregnant women must face many challenges.

2. Middle

Friend: Pregnant women have backaches.

Maternity: Pregnant women can't eat their favorite food.

Adviser: Pregnant women have morning sickness.

3. End

Friend: Later, pregnant women can hardly move.

Maternity: Then, pregnant women can also have "Maternity blues".

Maternity & Friend & Adviser: After the baby is born, new mothers must work all the time without a break.

d. Story

Pregnant women work hard, without a rest.

Then, pregnant women hope society will help support them.

But, mostly people don't help.

So, we should understand pregnant women's situation more and help.

**4. Body 3**

a. Main Point 3: Crack down on lawbreakers.

b. There are laws that protect pregnant women.

For example,

The equal employment act, child care and family care leave act and  
the act on advancement of measures to support raising next-generation children.

We like these laws because they can have a strong influence on Japanese society.

c. Drama

1. Beginning

Boss: I understand.

Friend: Really? So...

2. Middle

Boss: But! I won't change my thinking.

Pregnancy is hard, so pregnant women should stay home.

They should take care of their child.

Please leave!

Lawyer: You can't do this.

Boss: Oh? Why can't I?

Lawyer: I'm a lawyer. That is unlawful.

The law says that you can't fire her because she is pregnant.

If you do that, you will be arrested by the police.

3. End

Boss: That is a bad thing! OK. I will change my thinking and she can continue working.

d. Explanation

Pregnant women need a lot of money, so they hope to continue working.

But, companies often fire them.

So, the laws in Japan should be strong to protect pregnant women.

Then, life will become easier for pregnant women.

## 5. Conclusion

a. Some people say that firstly, all women have the right to work, even after their baby is born. Secondly, discrimination is not good. Finally, we also want to take care of the children in our society. Other people say that firstly, I don't want to pay a lot of labor costs. Secondly, it is difficult to change our society. Finally, men don't understand women.

But we think that maternity harassment is not good! Pregnant women should be recognized.

Thank you!

# Conference Reports

## Classroom Activities for Building Speech Skills - with Roehl Sybing

### Abstract

*On Saturday, November 21, 2015 at the JALT International Conference in Shizuoka Japan, Roehl Sybing of Nanzan Junior College conducted a lively workshop entitled "Classroom Activities for Building Speech Skills." The following paper highlights four activities that teachers can use to help students prepare for oral presentations. This report walks the reader through the four activities that Sybing presented called "Interview," "Tour Guide," "Seminar," and "Mirror."*

It can be difficult to get EFL students to practice for speeches or to speak spontaneously in them. At the 2015 JALT International Conference in Shizuoka, Roehl Sybing's hour-long workshop introduced four exercises to help students become more comfortable with impromptu speaking while increasing fluency. The goals of the activities are to reduce student anxiety and add accountability for preparation of students' speeches. Sybing attracted a full house: Thirty-five participants attended the workshop to enjoy his witty delivery and fast-paced, fun, pair and group activities.

### Background

In Sybing's presentation course at Nanzan Junior College, students prepare speeches in a separate writing class and deliver it at the end of the term in the speaking class. Sybing demonstrated each activity rather than just lecturing. This style is more effective for helping the "learners" remember the information presented (Bruner, 1960). The activities he walked the participants through were "Interview," "Tour Guide," "Seminar," and "Mirror."

### Activities

#### *Interview*

"Interview" is a great warm-up activity that can be used in any speaking class. Students are in groups of four. In each round, one student is the speaker and three are the "audience". The teacher writes a proficiency-appropriate prompt on the board such as "What is your favorite \_\_\_\_\_?" One member of the group asks the prompt question by completing it with information of their choosing (e.g., TV program, food, vacation spot, holiday, etc.). Sybing gives his students about five seconds to get an idea. The student speaks for 30 seconds, after which, the other three members of team ask questions about the impromptu "speech". This replicates the spontaneous

Q&A sessions after a presentation. This process is repeated three more times to give each student in the group a chance to speak. Each round, the prompt question is asked by a different student using a different idea to fill in the blank. After four rounds, each student has asked a different question and given a 30-second talk. As the semester progresses, the “speech” time can be increased gradually as students gain more confidence.

Sybing mentioned that the small audience of three in the above activity helps to minimize anxiety and gives students practice adlibbing. The Q&A session also provides students with feedback. This exercise allows for both meaning-focused input and meaning-focused output, two of strands needed in language-learning courses (Nation, 2013).

### ***Tour Guide***

The next activity was “Tour Guide”. In this paired exercise, students bring their prepared speeches, which they have practiced as homework. Partner A gives a copy of his/her speech to Partner B. While standing, A recites his/her speech, and B, sitting and reading along with the text, helps out if A cannot remember what comes next. Once the speech is completed, the students switch roles: Partner B reads his speech, and A helps when needed. Sybing emphasized that the speech does not need to be recited word for word. The teacher should remind the students that if the *meaning* is conveyed, no correction is needed.

“Tour Guide” gives students another opportunity to practice and memorize their speeches in pairs. Again, anxiety is reduced with one-on-one practice and students begin to feel more comfortable with the content of their speeches. Not all students will take the time to practice at home. However, in class, they are accountable to their partner who is reading along and listening at the same time. The partner who is listening and prompting is also getting meaning-focused input similar to paired reading, one of the top 20 language-learning activities (Nobuoka et al., 2015).

### ***Seminar***

“Seminar” can be done in pairs or groups. Based on questions similar to those used in the “Interview”, the student has 30 seconds to prepare a 2-minute speech. Sybing told his audience to have students create mind maps rather than write out sentences. Thirty seconds leaves only enough time to quickly jot down the main idea with two or three supporting ideas. It forces the students to think quickly. After the preparation time, one student stands up and gives the 2-minute speech from the mind map outline. When the two minutes are up, other students in the group ask questions about the speech. Again, students must pay attention to what is being said in order to create meaningful questions. This exercise helps students use their memory and practice speaking from an outline rather than a written speech.

### ***Mirror***

The final activity Sybing shared was “Mirror”. In this exercise, students deliver their prepared speeches to an audience of three. The three students listen and write an outline or mind map of what they hear. This activity checks students’ comprehension and also checks whether the students are working on memorizing their speeches. In addition, when the students compare the outlines to their speeches they can check the organization of its content.

Near the end of the workshop, there were a few questions. One participant asked why these activities were done in groups and seemed doubtful that students would do the work. Sybing reiterated that group work lessens the anxiety that students feel so they are more willing to speak. It also saves time in class: more students are speaking more often, rather than having one student speak to the entire class. It was mentioned by another participant that Paul Nation has a great paper on how to keep students accountable during group work by using a cooperative learning approach (<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/about/staff/publications/paul-nation/1989-Group-work.pdf>). Another participant asked why Sybing had the students stand or sit during the exercises. Sybing's reply was that it resembles actual presentation performances in which the speaker will be standing and the audience will be sitting.

Sybing encouraged his audience to use video to show students how they are doing and so that they can reflect on their own performance (gestures, and speaking skills). Another way to build body-language awareness is to have one student mimic all the movements and gestures of the speaker during the practice speech. This gives feedback about possible distracting movements.

## Conclusion

Sybing emphasized the time and effort it takes to deliver a speech in a second language. The enjoyable and easy-to-prepare activities help students prepare to deliver their speeches and manage impromptu speaking during Q&A. Each activity can be adapted for any oral communication class. All the activities were interactive with a strong emphasis on speaking and listening skills. Because each activity is rather unique, students will not become bored from practicing or repeating the same activities. With "Interview" and "Seminar", a variety of questions with various grammar points can be used in different lessons. Having listeners take notes and/or ask questions requires students to pay attention while building their language skills. Sybing's workshop was well worth the hour investment among many competing presentations at the JALT conference.

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# Book Reviews

## Review of *The Great Debate: An Introduction to Debate*

[James Venema. Perceptia Press. Nagoya, Japan. 58 pages. ISBN: 978-4939130-55-7.]

Reviewed by David Kluge, Nanzan University

It is difficult to find a good debate book that is appropriate for English classes in Japanese universities. Often debate books written for American universities, or even American high schools, are too difficult for Japanese students and the topics in the books are not relevant to them. Another problem is that often debate books written for the Japanese market are not so much debate books as they are discussion books. This is why it is so refreshing to see a textbook that teaches principles of formal debate written at an appropriate English level with topics that interest Japanese students. *The Great Debate* is such a book.

### Appearance

The book is a handy B5 size, and has relatively few pages: ten units and five appendices in 58 pages, making it both appealing and non-intimidating for students. The layout is clean and uncluttered, which adds to its appeal. The graphics are adequate, although some of the photos (all grayscale rather than black and white) lack clarity and interest.

### Structure

The book has a simple structure, which is a good trait when introducing a possibly difficult activity, which debate certainly can be. The sequence of the ten units is rational:

1. Getting started with debate
2. Topics and propositions
3. Reasons
4. Organizing the opening speech
5. Giving supports
6. Delivering & judging a speech
7. Organizing the refutation speech
8. Refutations: Logical & reference problems
9. Rebuttal speeches
10. Practice makes perfect

*Kluge: Review of “The Great Debate: An Introduction to Debate”*

Perhaps the only part that teachers may question would be the author’s choice to combine delivering a speech and judging a speech in the same unit. However, if you consider that the criteria for delivering a good debate speech should be the same as that used for judging the speech, this combination does not seem so strange.

The units are supplemented by five appendices: *Model speeches*, *Propositions*, *Example note-taking form*, *Note-taking forms*, and *Negative refutation model*. The *model speeches* appendix provides sample opening speeches (constructive speeches), refutations, and rebuttals for both affirmative and negative teams. The appendices are extremely helpful, except for Appendix 2, which would have been more useful if it had contained a list of possible propositions rather than providing a space for the students, or the whole class, to write down possible propositions. Also, a few more models would have been a welcome addition in Appendix 5 Negative refutation model.

The book, with its clean and uncluttered look, seems more like a workbook than a textbook, which is good from both the teacher’s and students’ points of view. Each unit has a simple and effective structure. The unit starts with a short, simple description of the unit topic, often only a half a page or so. This is followed by a subsection, called *Give it a try!* This section contains information, advice, examples, and activities such as identifying essential parts of a speech. There is a section called *Your turn* which asks students to use the information and advice to conduct a speaking activity that will prepare them to debate. Finally, there is a section called *Language practice* that helps students to learn and use the technical language of debate, such as terms like *signpost* or *propositions*, and common sentence patterns like how to report survey data.

## **Use**

The book teaches the basics of debate using simple language. However, it does not dumb down the debate activity by making it a discussion. It teaches three types of debate speeches: opening speeches, refutation speeches, and rebuttal speeches. One thing the book does not do is give a fixed order of speeches or fixed times for the speeches. These missing items, rather than being faults, are in fact strong points for the book. Not indicating the speech order or times allows the teacher to come up with an order and speech time limits that best match the level of students in the class. Even though I have indicated this to be a positive point of the body of the book, it might be helpful to teachers if there were an appendix with some suggested sequences of speeches and speech times.

This book, although primarily a textbook for debate or discussion courses, could also be used in oral communication classes, and even in a writing class. If used as the main book in a debate or discussion course, it would take a whole semester to cover—perhaps more if the teacher wants to allow for more time for the students to practice.

## **Conclusion**

This book is excellent for teaching debate to almost all levels of university students. Although it is a thin book, it contains all that is needed to teach the basics of formal debate and to take students from knowing nothing about it to doing a complete debate. It does so using a simple, unintimidating layout, and by including a lot of scaffolding through helpful activities and many easy-to-understand

*Kluge: Review of “The Great Debate: An Introduction to Debate”*

examples. It is one of the few books designed to teach debate to the general student body rather than only addressing small groups of top students. It is also one of the few debate textbooks specifically written for the EFL (English as a foreign language) market. It is definitely worth considering this book to see if it fits your institution’s curricular requirements, your teaching goals, and your students’ English needs.

**David Kluge** (Nanzan Junior College, Nanzan University) has been teaching English for over 35 years. His research interests include oral interpretation, speech, drama, debate, composition, and materials development.



## SD&D in Hot Water

The next SD&D conference is planned for late February or early March at the Hotel Kusakabe Armeria, a famous onsen hotel in Gero city, Gifu prefecture. <<http://www.armeria.co.jp/f/e/>>

It will be a full conference with presentations and workshops on oral interpretation, speech, drama, and debate—all in a relaxing atmosphere. Stay tuned for more hot information on how to submit presentation proposals and register for the conference!



# JOESC2016

Japan Online English Speech Contest 2016



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