



THE PIE SIG PODCAST

Resources

**Kevin Bergman's Annotated Bibliography for
Episode 3/4**

Drama in English Language Education

A Selective Annotated Bibliography

For a “niche” field, there is a surprising number of published resources for using drama in language education, so this list is far from comprehensive. I have limited myself to materials I have personally used and consulted in my experience so far. Each resource listed has its own set of references, and the reader is also encouraged to look through the publications of this PIE-SIG for even more resources that other members have found helpful.

I should note at the beginning that producing scripted drama to be performed before an audience, while the most popular use of English dramas in Japan, is somewhat of a peripheral interest in most resources in English. The majority of the print resources focus on classroom activities, often unscripted and not usually meant for public performance. In the titles below, the strongest on scripted performance are Burke (2002), Smith (1984) and Via (1976) in English, and Ota (2024) and Sano (1977, 1990) in Japanese.

A suggestion for teachers who do not read Japanese but are interested in the Japanese language materials below: pair up with a like-minded Japanese colleague who can translate the instructions for you and/or the students.

Unfortunately, a number of the texts I recommend are now out-of-print (makes with an asterisk*), but gratefully most of these can be accessed online through the Internet Archive <https://archive.org> or the Japanese National Diet Library <https://www.ndl.go.jp/en/index.html>. Access for both is free, but one must register to use the services. I have included individual links for the online versions of out-of-print titles, where available, as well as some for some of the in-print titles as well.

1. Classroom-oriented Activities (Guidance /Idea Books)

These books offer concrete examples of classroom drama activities with rationale and guidance for using them. Some have short, original scripts and advice about preparing skits and plays for performance, but the accent in most is on drama games and exercises for students’ personal creative development and language learning, not for performance. I often refer to such resources as “recipe books”. Not meant to be disparaging, this is to emphasize their focus on providing lists of games and exercises, giving practical “how to do it” procedures, with educational goals, levels and timing.

Burke, A. F., & O'Sullivan, J. C. (2002). ***Stage by stage: A handbook for using drama in the second language classroom***. Heinemann.
<https://archive.org/details/stagebystagehand0000burk>

Maybe the most comprehensive of the “general recipe books”. Useful for both classwork and performance orientations. Written for teachers new to using drama, as well as experienced practitioners, it offers clear rationales and practical guidance.

Cahnmann-Taylor, M., & McGovern, K. (2021). ***Enlivening instruction with drama and improv: A guide for second language and world language teachers***. Routledge.

One of the most recent general guides, its up-to-date rationale section makes effective use of “Critical Drama-based L2 History, Theory and Practice”. Of particularly help, the classroom activities reflect contemporary classroom technology and practice.

*Christen, L. (1994). ***Drama skills for life***. Heinemann Drama.
<https://archive.org/details/dramaskillsforli0000chri/mode/2up>

レスリー・クリステン [著] ; 吉田新一郎 訳. (2003). ドラマ・スキル : 生きる力を引き出す
(*Dorama sukiru : ikiru chikara o hikidasu*) Yoshida.S trans. 新評論 Shoshikai

Subtitled “A Handbook for Secondary Teachers” it helpfully articulates the educational and personal development benefits of creative group play, mime and improvisation and shows the relevance of the skills that drama develops to other disciplines and everyday life. It has a Japanese language edition, which is a rarity among these resources.

Maley, A. & Duff. A. (1982). ***Drama Techniques in Language Learning: A resource book of communication activities for language teachers***. Cambridge University Press.
<https://archive.org/details/dramatechniquesi0000male>

One of the most referenced books on the subject, it has had a tremendous impact on the field. Mostly a “recipe book”, on page one, the authors clearly state the intention of their work is for classroom use only and are rather dismissive of performing plays for an audience. However, there is a chapter that allows a place for using poetry, songs and “literary texts”.

太田 雅一 Ota, M. (2024). 生徒の英会話力が向上する 英語劇・ドラマメソッド (*Seito no Eikaiwa ryoku ga kojo suru Eigo Geki: Drama method*) **Improving Students' English Conversation Skills: The English Drama Method**
幻冬舎 Gentosha

The most complete articulation of “The Drama Method” popularized by Richard Via and his followers and further developed by the conversation school chain, Modern Language Studio. Chapters survey typical barriers Japanese students face, and how drama activities can overcome them. It also shares scripts and teaching procedures.

*佐野 正之 Sano, M. (1977) 英語劇のすすめ (*Eigo Geki no Susume. Recommending English Dramas*). 大修館書店 Taishukan
<https://ndlsearch.ndl.go.jp/en/books/R100000002-I000001360460>

A pioneering comprehensive guide by a respected educator from a major educational publisher. It includes 3 scripts (using traditional Japanese folktales) and basic guidance of play production.

*佐野 正之 Sano, M. (1981) 英語授業にドラマの手法を (*Eigo Jugyo ni Drama-teki hoho wo. Using Drama Techniques in English Classes*) 大修館書店 Taishukan
<https://ndlsearch.ndl.go.jp/en/books/R100000002-I000001511791>

Useful even if one doesn't read Japanese. Sano makes a case for using drama (especially short skits) in regular English classes in Japanese schools, so an ALT could use it to persuade a skeptical Japanese teaching partner. Typical school grammar points are illustrated with well-written skits.

*佐野 正之 Sano, M.(1990) 英語劇指導マニュアル (*Eigo Geki Shido Manyuaru Manual for Directing English Dramas*) 玉川大学出版部
<https://ndlsearch.ndl.go.jp/en/books/R100000002-I000002048833>

An update and expansion on author Sano's earlier books on English Drama. Available online from the National Diet Library. Recently out-of-print, but it may be easier to find than the books from the '70s and '80s.

Savage, A. (2019). ***The Drama Book: Lesson plans, activities, and scripts for English-language learners***, (W. Burns, Ed.). Alhabet Publishing.

The subtitle is its best summary, this comparatively recent publication is an excellent collection of useful material, divided fairly evenly between activities and scripts.

*Smith, S.M. (1984). *The Theater Arts and the Teaching of Second Languages*. Addison-Wesley.
<https://archive.org/details/theaterartsteach00smit/mode/2up>

An older, but still useful general guidebook. While it has many "recipes", it includes a bit more direct help with "play production" than more recent publications.

渡辺 淳、正嘉昭 Watanabe, J & Tadashi, Y. (2006, 2007) ドラマケーション ― 5 分間で出来る人間関係創り ― 1, 2. (*Dramacation, go-fun kan de dekiru ningen-kankei tsukuri Dramacation: Building Relationships in Just 5 Minutes*) 晩成書房 Bansei Shobo

Short communication games focused on group building and creative interaction, designed for typical Japanese classes with a large number of students. The two volumes also include encouragement and recommendations by a wide variety of Japanese educators and theater makers. Videos showing the exercises in practice are included.

Whiteson, V. (Ed). *New Ways of Using Drama and Literature in Language Teaching*. TESOL.
<https://archive.org/details/newwaysofusingdr0000unse>

A volume in TESOL's popular "New Ways" series, it follows the series' format of clear and specific instructions (levels, goals, time, procedures etc.) for classroom drama activities, contributed by a wide range of teachers.

*Via, R. A. (1976) ***English in Three Acts***. University Press of Hawaii.

One of the few resources in English drawn for teaching students in Japan, this hard-to-get book is worth the search. Richard Via is a major figure in the history of English Drama production and actor education in Japan. "Act One" presents the rationale for drama, as well as Via's signature "Talk and Listen" approach to acting. "Act Two" focuses on selecting and directing the text, and a number of short play scripts. "Act Three" is a guide to actual play production.

2. Primarily scripts for Classroom Use

While many of the books in section 1 above include scripted materials, there are quite a number of collections of just scripts for English language learners, of varying quality, available in print and online. The following are script collections or ancillary materials I have found helpful.

*Case, D., & Wilson, K. (1995). **English sketches: Sketches from the English teaching theatre**. Intermediate (Vol. 2). Macmillan Heinemann English Language Teaching.
<https://archive.org/details/englishsketches20000doug>

My favorite short skit (5-6 minute) collection, for groups of 2-5. Well-written, witty comedic sketches built around language areas (notional-functional, basic expressions and grammar points). Brief but helpful teacher notes for each skit. Two volumes (elementary and intermediate), it seems only the intermediate level is on the Internet Archive).

Harrington, D., & LeBeau, C. (2013). **Performance: Conversation scenes from everyday life**. Language Solutions Inc.

Drama and role play as the organizing principle for an English conversation class text. As the authors long taught in Japan, their material works very well with Japanese students.

*Hines, M.E. (1980) **Skits in English** Prentice-Hall Regents
https://archive.org/details/skitsinenglish0000hine_c8y7/mode/2up

A short skit collection from the 1980's, built around grammar structures, for groups of 5 or more students. Comprehension questions and suggested improvisational extensions are included.

*Nomura, Y. (1982). **Pinch and ouch: English through drama**. Lingual House.
<https://archive.org/details/pinchouchenglish0000nomu/mode/2up>

Short pairwork sketches with illustrations that show two possible situations for each dialogue (pragmatics in action). Teaches the “talk and listen” technique popularized by Richard Via and Yoko Narahashi (then Nomura). An invaluable resource.

Romijin, E. & Seely, C. (1997) **Live Action English**. Command Performance Language Institute.
<https://archive.org/details/liveactionenglis00eliz/mode/2up>

A “ series of commands for communication”, using imperatives to effectively connects language with physical action. A very practical and engaging application of the TPR “Total Physical Response” method. It has been a fail-safe warmup activity and orientation to drama work with first-time students.