

ROLE-PLAY GAMES IN THE ESL CLASSROOM

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Undoubtedly speaking is an essential part of teaching English. There are many ways how to do this in modern methodology. It is not only enough for students to have an opportunity to speak in English, the main aim of every teacher is to help students know how to react in certain situations. One of the main challenges nowadays is teaching speaking in real communicative situation. One of the most effective ways to immerse students into real-life communication is a role-play game. The wide definition of a role-play game is changing of one's behaviour to assume a role, either unconsciously to fill a social role, or consciously to act out an adopted role. In a more narrow sense a role play game (RPG) is an improvised story composed of chains of actions and reactions between players. You decide on your interaction with other players on the spot. This form of teaching allows combining group, pair and individual work at the lesson.

The purpose of role-play that applies to practical usage in communication demands the flexibility of participants' words the more approximately the activity access to reality, the more interests students will take in, so the choice of roles and contexts become very important. The main reason of using them is they are fun and motivating. The world of the classroom is broadened to include the outside world offering a much wider range of language opportunities.

Thus role play game changes places of motive and aim: applying knowledge, that is the goal of the game, becomes a mean of achieving aim of the game.

When organizing the practice of role-play, the teacher must provide a context and several roles for students to prepare and then perform in the class. At the first period, the teacher should be brief and to the point so that the students would have more time to perform. Also, try to keep the topic real and relevant and the roles you ask students to play as real to life as possible. 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. 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. Furthermore, the

teacher should create a comfortable atmosphere so that the students wouldn't feel nervous and pressed. During the game teacher can perform different roles. Some of the possible teacher roles are:

- 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.

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.

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 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.

To sum up, incorporating role-play into the classroom adds variety, a change of pace and opportunities for a lot of language production and also a lot of fun! It can be an integral part of the class and not a 'one-off' event. Real situations can be created and students can benefit from the practice. Mistakes can be made with no drastic consequences.

References

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