

Lesson idea: puppet play

Problem:

Practice conversation skills in the classroom is difficult to organize. Working in groups provides a lot of noise and is difficult to guide. The classic way of organizing conversation skill often produce unsafe situations for the pupils. Pupils (like adults) are generally not comfortable with public speaking for groups. For this last mentioned drawback the puppet play could offer a way out.

Possible solution:

The puppet show sets easily how the learner will be able to have a part in a roleplay. They can largely be taken away from their own person. The pupil is not himself but plays a character, the pupil does not need to present himself but can hide behind the puppet and that way seems not to be directly responsible for errors in language production and pronunciation.

How to implement:

Fluency through role-playing is by nature and condition not otherwise organized than traditional exercise of conversation skills. There are groups, there is a presentation, and, hopefully through the lesson book used in the classroom, directly connecting with the European Framework and the (digital) Language Portfolio. The vocabulary is studied at home and practiced in the classroom via the dialogues in the exercise book. Thereafter, the pupils can in a small group write a dialogue based on the model of the exercise book (simple) or with the same basic vocabulary themselves invent a situation as well as the characters and write a dialogue (more difficult).

Lesson planning:

1 Initial situation:

the teacher has dedicated a number of lessons to the vocabulary and the students have learned this at home. The teacher has played the recordings of the lesson book and the students know what the stories are about, for example: presenting yourself (CEF A1).

The teacher has facilitated the practising of fluency in small groups in the classroom using the exercise book.

2 Introduction: the teacher invites the students to think in groups about a situation and matching characters.

The students are asked to consider a suitable character for themselves and fit it in consultation with the group into the situation.

The teacher gives an example of a dialogue by putting a few sentences on the black or digital board together with the class and ask the groups to do the same.

The teacher guides (ideas) the dialogues arising but does not deal with questions such as Master/teacher: How do you say this? He/she Also keeps an eye on the clock with a view to the presentations.

The students work together up to the best possible dialogue (may make use of the dictionary) and until all group members have roughly the same amount of text.

The pupils should now take the following steps:

Create a puppet

Learn their own text, in context of the dialogue, by heart.

Make an appointment in group to practice 'flow'.

And make an appointment with the teacher for the presentation

The teacher provides the children's performing area and film equipment.

The pupils perform their game and are judged according to CEF-based rubrics.

Evaluation by the teacher:

In my experience it's nice for pupils to invent such a character and to make up such a situation. The dialogue then automatically pops up. By the implementation, the pupils may continue to distance their own person further away from the presentation by inventing funny voices which are likely to benefit presentation and language skills.

It turned out to be entertaining to see the puppetshow. The pupils had spend a lot of work and time at home creating their puppet and the dialogues were fun. The students found the task also fun and could store the can do-statements, their movie and the assessment of the teacher in their language portfolio.