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## CREATIVE DRAMA : A NEW WAY TO USE SKITS

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Creative dramatics is nothing new to the ESL classroom. Every ESL teacher has almost certainly used creative dramatics in the classroom, whether it is the pantomime used to explain a word, the jazz chant, the role play, the song, the improvisation, the game, or information gap activity. To that degree, there is nothing innovative in what I propose. Where there may be innovation is in the format, in the systematizing of lessons built around creative drama exercises.

By creative dramatics I mean the imaginative play of children and artist that allows them to formulate a parallel reality (not unlike a dream), sharing much in common with everyday reality, but allowing the creator far more control and freedom over the aspects of life that terrify or delight us. This imaginative play is the children's forum, the laboratory in which much of their language is acquired. It is their pronunciation practice, their substitution drills, their dialogues, their structure practice and as such, seems a likely candidate for inclusion in the ESL curriculum.

Moreover, creative drama is cheap and portable. It requires no books, no equipment, no film or tape. It does not even require pen or paper, though they can be put to good use (and when they are, all four skill areas can be covered). Creative drama can be done in any setting, sitting at a desk or running across a playground.

Although creative drama in the classroom is not a new idea, elements of it can be found in Ascher's TPR, in communicative activities and certainly in the dozens of daily attempts teachers and students make to leap over the language barrier. What is offered here is a particular organization of a number of exercises that are arranged in such a way as to culminate in a theatrical performance. However, this performance is optional;

indeed, the exercises may be lifted out of this arrangement and inserted into any curricular context.

This organization has been used as the basic curriculum for two different types of classes at the Center for English Language Learning at Maryville College. One is called "content course," that is a course in which English is the medium through which some other subject matter is learned, for example, cooking or government. These classes typically last four weeks and meet three hours a week. The second situation in which this format is used occurs every summer when approximately 50 students from Mejiro Gakuen Women's College of Tokyo spend three weeks at Maryville College. The drama class is one of three; the other two are conversation and culture. The drama class culminates in a fairly elaborate one and a half to two hour theatrical production. However, I do not mean to overemphasize the product. In fact, it is the process that is significant and which has more potential for wide-spread application. It is the exercises that lead to the product which can be lifted out of the arrangement and fitted into any number of curricular contexts.

Before I go further, let me say a word about some doubts you may have regarding the applicability of creative drama to you and your students.

First of all, you don't have to be an actor or a director or even a student of the theatre to use these ideas. You don't have to be dramatic yourself. The best facilitator, or side-coach, is probably someone who is low-key and willing to let others occupy the creative spotlight. You don't have to model acting skill. The objective of these exercises is not great theatre art, it is language development through imaginative play. You know about language development. The only further

requirements are respect for the imagination and the ability to work playfully and play seriously.

Secondly, creative drama is not for every student. There are some who mistrust it, just as they mistrust games or songs or pair work, because it does not seem serious enough, but those people are in the minority. For the students from Mejiro Gakuen, a tradition has grown up around the drama class that apparently pre-empts skepticism. For our students in the Center for English Language Learning, drama class is an elective, so they come into the class with a clear idea of what we will be doing. I believe, however, that creative drama could be built into general high school and college curricula with at least no more resistance than that which is provoked by other non-traditional approaches. Most people have liked to play at some point in their lives, and if their dignity can be persuaded of its value, they will like to play again.

**MAGIC WORDS:** At the center of Elizabeth Rike's approach are what she calls "The 5 W's": Who, What (Doing), Where, When, and Why. Answer these question words, and you have a sentence. Add a problem, and you have a story. I have added "How," not only to work in yet another part of speech, but also its attendant phenomena.

These words, Who, What (Doing), How, Where, When, and Why, are prominently displayed in the classroom. I refer to them as "magic words"... without too much embarrassment--because these few, small words have so much capacity. In them can be contained a serviceable English sentence, a news story, or the plotline to Hamlet. To have them firmly in mind is to have a checklist of the essential items of information. They are, moreover, an excellent way to jump start the imagination and the creative process.

Answer these questions, no matter how randomly or arbitrarily, and the seed of a story begins to grow.

**WHO WHAT (DOING) HOW WHERE WHEN WHY**

The boy ran fearfully from the cave last night because a bat was chasing him!

Hamlet vacillated maddeningly in Denmark a few hundred years ago because he was torn between Mom and Dad.

The entire course is organized around these words. They are presented linearly as above to emphasize that this is common English word order. However the first of the lessons designed around these words is not about

"Who," but about "What." This may confuse the students, but if it is carefully explained that sentence word order is going to be temporarily violated in order to stress another value, they will probably be able to keep everything straight. The competing value (in this case) is that in drama and in storytelling, action (verbs) dominates all the other elements. Who (character), Where and When (setting), How and Why (motivation) are all revealed through action. (Some might argue that verbs hold comparable dominion in sentences in that they are the only element that cannot be ellipsed.)

The exploration of What is followed by lessons centered on Who, How, Where, When, Why. To begin the skit-production phase of the course, the question words are joined by the Problem with its inherent demand for a Solution. If earlier exercises have failed to make the point, surely the inclusion of a problem into the formula helps--even forces--the student to appreciate that stories must have beginnings, middles and ends and that drama is dynamic not static. A great deal of emphasis is put on the value of logically arranged illuminating detail. Comparisons are drawn between dramatic structure and narrative structure, which are important values in English.

Along the way to skit production, the classes rely heavily on pantomime, an almost universal language which can give students access to new vocabulary in the target language; improvisation, story-telling, character study, and theatre games and exercises. Some of the suggested activities are appropriate for general use in any E.S.L. classroom; some are certainly for a "content class" in drama; some can be used with beginning students, some only with advanced students.

Finally, despite the fact that not every student is a potential artist, most of them have art within themselves. Therefore, in "drama class," if indeed it is a "content course," their work is treated very seriously and with great respect. Not infrequently, there have been moments of true art, moments in which some insight has been apprehended and communicated to others. This respect for and emphasis on creativity with language have often lifted a student off a plateau in English acquisition. Creative drama can rejuvenate the burned-out student and the burned-out teacher.

## **CONNECTING THE QUESTION WORDS: HOW ONE LEADS TO ANOTHER**

**WHO?**

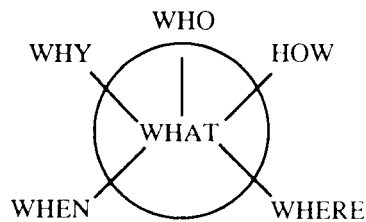
**WHAT (DOING)?**

HOW?  
WHERE?  
WHEN?  
WHY?

### MAKE A SENTENCE > MAKE A DRAMA

Teacher elicits a sentence from students using question words. Students set the sentence in motion. Is it drama? A problem is added. A solution is added.

### EVERY QUESTION WORD IS RELATED TO THE OTHERS



1. WALKING EXERCISES: (The following exercises can be used with MOST LEVELS. The directions from the teacher can be geared down to all but the newest students.)

We start with WHAT (DOING) because it is an action. We are actors, and action is the most important way we tell a story.

1. One person walks across the room. Others observe.  
What can we see in the walk? Can we see WHO?  
HOW? WHERE? WHEN? WHY?
2. A second student walks, leads with head?  
WH-Questions?  
A third student walks, leads with chest?  
WH-Questions?  
A fourth student walks, leads with stomach?  
WH-Questions?
3. Walking: WHO (All students can do this walking either in a circle or back and forth in the classroom.)

You are two years old.  
You are a fifteen years old.  
You are seventy-five years old.

(As students perform the walks, the teacher comments on the characteristics revealed)

You are a soldier.  
You are a fashion model.  
You are a pregnant woman  
You are a robber.

4. Sitting . HOW (Students can do this at their desks.)

Sadly  
Angrily  
Impatiently  
Timidly  
Contemptuously

5. Eating a sandwich: WHERE (Again at desks)

In a hospital waiting room  
In a bar filled with attractive people  
At a dangerous bus stop in New York City  
In your favorite chair at home

6. Washing your face: WHEN

Camping in the winter  
Very early in the morning  
On a hot summer day  
When you are late for class

7. Drinking: WHY

Because your are crossing the desert  
Because your wife/husband abandoned you  
Because you are being polite: you hate the drink you have been given  
Because you need some caffeine to wake you up.

II. PANTOMIME EXERCISES (These exercises can be used to introduce pantomime as a convention of the class. They can also be used to emphasize the importance of observation, sense memory, clarity, and authenticity of detail.) ALMOST ALL LEVELS

1. For example, the teacher might begin this way: "I have a present . It is a very special gift all the way from the United States. It is a glass ball. I will let you see it, but please don't drop it. Be very careful, (The teacher holds up the glass ball, carefully maintaining the size, then passes it to a student.) Please be careful. (If the students does not maintain the size of the original ball, the teacher comments on it--"Look, the ball just got bigger!" Similarly, if the student releases the ball before it is safely in the hands of another student, the teacher may comment, thus emphasizing the need to be true to the dramatic "reality."

2. The ball can become a basketball or volleyball. As the position of the students' hands change to depict the various kinds of balls, the teacher can ask: "How did your hands know how to change? Because they can

remember. Your hands can remember many things, the shape of a ball, the shape of a spoon. We call this 'sense memory.' And your hands can remember because they often use balls or spoons or pens. Sometimes we can remember things we haven't done, things we have only seen. This we call "observation."

(If the English of these teacher directions seems too difficult, make it simple: "What am I doing? I am playing soccer. I have no ball; how can I play soccer? My feet remember. Can you play soccer? See, your feet can remember. Can you snow ski? Yes, you can. Do you snow ski? No? How can you snow ski here in the class? You don't snow ski outside. Oh, you can watch people snow ski on t.v. You can OBSERVE!")

3. The teacher can lead (talk) the students through a pantomime of brushing teeth, making sure the students carefully place each thing they pantomime in its proper place on the shelf or sink, not suspending it in mid-air as first time pantomimers are likely to do. Teachers should remind students of the important details that will make their actions clear.

4. On student is invited to the front to pantomime a well-known action, such as frying an egg. As the action is performed, the teacher asks questions of the students: "What is he doing? What is he using? Did he turn on the stove? Did he use salt?" (Obviously, this can be used in almost any classroom setting to practice structures and tenses.)

5. The teacher can lead the students through an action story such as "Tiger Hunter,"--"We are walking through tall grass (pushing the grass out of the path). It is very hot (Wiping sweat from their brows). We are climbing up a mountain (climbing motion). Etc.

6. Group pantomime exercise: In groups, students pantomime action that depict a place (bowling alley, factory, farmyard). Other students watch and later describe what they have seen. When one group has been misunderstood in its actions by the rest of the students, the teacher can review the actions and perhaps find the place where something was not clear or missing.

**III. IMPROVISATION EXERCISE** (These exercises are important for introducing improvisation or role plays into the classroom. They are, perhaps, more appropriate for **CONTENT CLASSES; INTERMEDIATE LEVELS AND ABOVE.**)

1. **Celebrity Airplane Improvisation:** Who? A celebrity, so famous everyone in the world knows you

What Doing? Traveling

How?

Where? In an airplane, but to where?

When? Now

Why?

**Objective:** You will have a conversation with your seatmate on an airplane. You recognize the face, but you can't think who this famous person is. You are too embarrassed to ask his/her name. You can ask general questions, but you cannot ask the name. Remember, you are also a celebrity. You must know who you are, where you are going, why you are going, how you are feeling about going there.

2. **Discovery Exercise:** You must prepare a pantomime. You must know the answers to all the WH-Questions. The pantomime will have three parts:

- 1) Make an entrance in one mood (feeling)
- 2) Discover something that changes your mood
- 3) Exit in a different mood

## **DAY 2: EXPLORING THE WHAT**

Yesterday, the point was made that Wh-Questions are connected to each other. All affect the action. For example, an old person does not walk the same way a child does. We don't walk the same in the rain as we do in the heat or cold. We don't walk the same in the dark as we do in daylight. We don't walk the same way to the principal's office that we do to the candy store. And with action we tell Who, Where, When, How, Why. Therefore, on the stage and in life action is the most important of these very important words.

For our English class, the What is also the most important for this reason: We all speak at least two languages, our native language and the language of action. Moreover, the language of action is an almost universal language. It is not 100% universal. There are differences in the ways people do things the world over. We don't all take a bath the same way. Baths in Thailand are different from baths in Japan and both are different from baths in the United States. But at some point soap and water are applied to the body in all three, and it is with this action that we can communicate to almost everybody in the world.

So if almost all of us speak almost the same language of action, we can use that language to learn another. I show you the action you know, then give you the words for it.

However, if we are to use this universal language of action, we must become good "speakers" of that language. We must remember exactly how the action is done. We must not leave out details. We must be specific. We must remember.

I. Today, as you do your discovery exercise, remember to do it carefully. From your actions, we must know who you are, what you are doing, how you are doing it (the mood) where you are, when you are and why you are doing what you are doing.

As you watch your classmates do the exercise, write down what they are doing as they are doing it. For example, if you are watching Harumi, write:

He is...coming into a room  
                   turning on the light  
                   sitting in an easy chair  
                   reading a book  
                   etc.

Now that he has finished, write three sentences using the Wh-Questions. Write about what he did and how he felt when he came in. What he did and how he felt when he made his discovery. What he did and what he felt when he left.

For example: Harumi came tiredly into his apartment after class because he wanted to rest.

He discovered a fire fearfully in the bedroom two minutes later because he smelled the smoke.

He left his apartment hurriedly after he saw the fire because he was afraid of dying.

#### **ALTERNATE METHOD: (Most Levels)**

1) ONE STUDENT IS A T.V. NEWSREPORTER, LIVE ON THE SCENE HE REPORTS. THE ACTION, USING THE PRESENT PROGRESSIVE. THE ACTOR OF THE PANTOMIME MUST GO SLOWLY ENOUGH AND PAUSE BETWEEN ACTIONS ENOUGH TO ALLOW THE REPORTER TO DESCRIBE WHAT HE IS DOING AFTER ONE STUDENT REPORTER AND ONE STUDENT ACTOR HAVE MODELED THIS FOR THE CLASS. OTHER STUDENTS CANNOT DO THIS BESIDE THEIR DESKS IN PAIR WORK

2) TO PRACTICE THE SIMPLE PAST: HAVE THE REPORTER BRING THE STORY BACK TO THE "STUDIO" FOR A LATER BROADCAST.

3) WRITING ASSIGNMENT: STUDENTS WRITE A NEWSSTORY OF THE ACTION

II. Group exercise: As a group decide on a pantomime activity for the whole group. Let the activity determine the Who, How, Where, When and Why. You will perform the action for the other group who will write down what you did. They will then tell you exactly what you did. **(MOST LEVELS)**

III. Using the same pantomime, introduce a problem. The other group will watch and describe.

IV. Now, go back into your group and find a solution. Act out the solution while the other group observes. You should have a complete drama with a beginning, middle and end.

V. For tomorrow: We will explore the Who. For homework, choose a famous person, whom everybody knows or at least may know and whom you know well. You are going to do a LIFE WALK. You will show all the major events of their lives while doing a slow motion walk. You will start from their birth. You will show not only famous events that will help us to know their identity, but you will also show experiences that will help us to understand their personalities. **(CONTENT CLASS: INTERMEDIATE AND UP)**

VI. For tomorrow: Write a monologue. A monologue is a speech said by one actor alone on stage. In the monologue, you should have a beginning, a middle, and an end. You can use our discovery exercise today as a model. Begin the monologue in one mood, make a discovery (either externally or internally) which changes the mood. **(CONTENT CLASS: INTERMEDIATE AND UP)**

Examples: Internal Discovery:

Oh my God, what am I going to do? I have a test in half an hour, and I know I'm going to fail it. I have studied and studied, but I can't remember what I read. My mind just won't focus. I can't concentrate. I can never take tests well. I am my own worst enemy. I hate this. I don't think I can do it. This is just like when I was a kid, and I had to dance in a school program. I was terrified then, too. It was awful. I knew I was going to fall or forget the steps,.....

But I didn't! That's right, I didn't. I danced very well! I had forgotten, but that night was a triumph for me. How did I do it? What was the secret?

Now, I remember. When I got on the stage, I couldn't see the audience. I could only hear the music. I thought only of the music and I danced to it.

That's what I'll do on this test. I will think only of the numbers. I'll forget about passing or failing. I like

to play with numbers. I'll just play.

This test will be fun. It's a chance to do what I like best, solve problems. I can't wait.

#### External Discovery

Let's see, I've got to get presents for Andy and Ken. I want to get them something they'll really like, something that's really different. I could buy a couple of those elephant vests. They'd love those. There's nothing like them in the United States. They're expensive, but so what? My trip is over, and I have plenty of money left. I'm going to do it. God, they're going to love those things.

Now where's my money. Not in this pocket; it must be in the other one. It's not. Where the hell is it? I know I had \$100 in my pocket when I left the hotel. I remember changing from my jeans to these pants. Somebody picked my pocket. That was all the money I have left. How am I going to get to the airport? How am I going to pay the airport tax. Oh, my God.

### DAY 3: EXPLORING THE WHO

(This lesson is an example of how an acting exercise can build vocabulary)

#### (BEGINNING LEVELS)

##### I. How do we define Who?

- A. By gender
- B. By age
- C. By body type
- D. By occupation
- E. By temperament
- G. By intellect

A. Gender: man, woman, boy, girl, homosexual, lesbian, transexual, transvestite

B. infant, baby, toddler, child, adolescent, teenager, young adult, adult, middle-age, elderly senior citizen

##### C. Thin Fat

Slim Chubby

Skinny Plump

Handsome Beautiful Ugly

Pretty Hideous

Cute Homely

Attractive Plain

Good-looking Unattractive

Tall Short curvy

Strong Weak voluptuous

Muscular Puny

Husky

Stocky

D. Occupations: doctor, lawyer, teacher, minister, businessman, nurse, secretary, barber, hairdresser, construction worker, janitor, receptionist, stewardess, military personnel, chauffeur, bus driver, taxi driver, garbage collector, air traffic controller, chef, cook, waiter, actor, politician, civil servant, bureaucrat, executive, manager, supervisor, superintendent, director, boss, employee, employer

E. Family relationships: mother, father, son, daughter, sister, brother, uncle, aunt, grandmother, grandfather, cousin

F. Temperament: emotional calm

angry pleasant

hateful loving

cruel kind

unfriendly friendly

sad happy

serious frivolous

thoughtful inconsiderate

G. Intellect: stupid smart

unintelligent intelligent

dull sharp

humorless witty

moronic wise

imbecilic savvy

ignorant knowledgable

II. Which of these things can the actor show? How? Gender? Age? Body Type? Occupation? Family role? Temperament? Intellect?

CHOOSE AN ACTION TO PANTOMIME AT YOUR DESK (FOR EXAMPLE, WASH YOUR FACE)

DO THE ACTION AS A WOMAN

DO THE ACTION AS A MAN

DO THE ACTION AS YOUNG CHILD

DO THE ACTION AS A TEEN

DO THE ACTION AS AN OLD PERSON

DO THE ACTION AS A VERY WEAK PERSON

DO THE ACTION AS A VERY FAT PERSON

DO THE ACTION AS A SECRETARY

DO THE ACTION AS A SUMO WRESTLER

DO THE ACTION AS A SON BEING WATCHED  
BY A FATHER

DO THE ACTION AS A GRANDFATHER  
TEACHING A CHILD

DO THE ACTION AS A NERVOUS PERSON

DO THE ACTION AS A LAZY PERSON

DO THE ACTION AS A GENIUS

DO THE ACTION AS A STUPID PERSON

### III. CHARACTER STUDY (ADVANCED LEVELS)

Choose a person on campus to observe. Watch the way that person walks, moves, talks, sits, stands. Practice these. Create a simple action for that character to perform such as writing a letter and taking it to the post office and a monologue to go with it. Try to understand the mental and emotional origins of the physical and vocal characteristics.

### IV. ELEVATOR IMPROVISATION. (INTERMEDIATE LEVELS AND UP)

You are on an elevator. Suddenly the elevator stops between floors. Your objective is to solve the problem of a stuck elevator by cooperating with the other people on it. They, like you, have a card on their back that describes their character (for example, sweet but stupid, natural leader, crazy and dangerous, funny but lazy). In addition to getting out of the elevator, you must figure out what your character is like by the way people treat you. Caution: don't give obvious clues like: "Oh, you are so sweet and so stupid." You would never say that to someone, especially a stranger on an elevator nor would you tell a dangerous person that he or she was dangerous. Play the reality.

### DAY 4: EXPLORING THE WHEN & HWERE

Every day we have seen that the questions words are interrelated. In other words, one question leads to all the others. If you start with an action, you immediately want to know Who, Where, When, Why, How. If you begin with the Who, then you want to know What (doing). Today, we are going to do some improvisations (an improvisation is a story or drama that we make up as we go). We are going to use the questions words, but today we are going to begin with Where.

I. "Knock on the Door" is a Where improvisation. You

will work in pairs. You are given part of the Where: there is door between you. You must complete the Where by deciding what the door separates. Does it separate outside from a living room, two stalls in a restroom, or heaven from hell? One of you is knocking on the door, the second person is on the other side of the door. Each of you must decide who you are and what you are doing, why and how. The When is now. Make sure you have a beginning, middle and end. **(INTERMEDIATE LEVELS AND UP)**

II. Hidden Agendas: This is a two-person improvisation in which the people are working at cross-purposes. Each of you has an objective, but you don't know what your partner's objective is. Your classmates know what your objectives are and will decide after the improvisation which one of you has done best job of achieving your goal.

Examples:

A: You want your parent to let you drive the car on Friday night, but you are afraid he/she will refuse.

B: You want your child to stay home and study more so he or she will have better grades but the child is stubborn and must be persuaded very carefully.

A: You want to tell your boss that he/she smells bad, but you don't want to lose your job.

B: You want to tell your employee to stop wearing so much perfume, but you don't want to hurt his/her feelings.

A: You want your neighbor to do something about his/her dog. It's been barking all night and keeping you awake, but your neighbor has a very hot temper and gets angry easily.

B: You want your neighbor to keep your dog for two months while you are on vacation but you know that your neighbor doesn't like dogs. You must be careful. Your neighbor thinks you have a bad temper, and you really want to speak nicely.

A: Your upstairs neighbor is having a noisy party, and you want to go to bed. Call your neighbor and try to persuade him/her to be quiet. Be nice.

B: You are having a surprise birthday party for your friend downstairs. But you have to find a way to get him/her to come up to your apartment without letting him/her know the real reason.

NOTE: THESE CAN BE DONE AS PAIR WORK AT STUDENTS' DESKS

**(INTERMEDIATE LEVELS AND UP)**

III. Exploring When. This will be your first exercise in script writing. This is your assignment for tomorrow. You will work in groups of three. If there is time, you can begin in class. If not, you will have to meet together tonight to produce and rehearse this short skit. You must answer all the WH-Questions, but begin with When and let that answer lead you to all the other answers. You can begin with simple time of day, for example, midnight. Midnight suggests many things, some ordinary like taking a romantic walk under the stars, some scary like visiting a cemetery. Or, you can choose a historic When, for example, the moment when man first walked on the moon or when Columbus first found North America. However, if you choose a historic time, don't feel that you must be a famous, historical person. You don't have to be Neil Armstrong or Christopher Columbus; you can be the cook on Columbus ship or a mouse that was hiding on the rocket ship. **DO NOT WRITE DOWN THE SCRIPT.** Decide When, Who, What (Doing), Where, How, Why. Give yourselves an interesting problem to solve. Then improvise and pretend. Use spoken English. Do the improvisation five times. The plot of your story should become more and more definite. You can change it from one time to the next, improving it, but try to "set" it. You will never decide on the exact words, but you should decide what happens. The events or incidents of the story should begin to stay the same. **(BEGINNING LEVELS AND UP--WITH CAREFUL EXPLANATION AND PREPARATION)**

#### **FURTHER EXERCISES WITH WHEN AND WHERE:**

1) In groups, choose a historical time--100, 200, 500, 1,000 years ago or from now. Create a simple scene of an ordinary, everyday group activity--preparing dinner, making clothes, building a house. You can pantomime the action but use simple, improvised dialogue as necessary. How is your chosen time different from this time? How can you show those differences? Through action? Through dialogue?

#### **(INTERMEDIATE LEVELS AND UP)**

2) Choose an action to pantomime.

Do the action early on a spring morning.

Do the action late on a chilly night.

Do the action in winter.

Do the action behind enemy lines.

Do the action on the stage of a huge rock concert.

Do the action late at night with your parents sleeping in the next room.

#### **(BEGINNING LEVELS)**

#### **DAY 5: EXPLORING HOW AND WHY**

I. Look at improvisations assigned from the day before. Have the audience decide Who, What, How, Where, When, Why. What was the problem? What was the solution? Was there a beginning, middle, and end? Was it clear? Was the action strong? Were the "stakes high"?

II. Today we are going to explore How and Why we do things. Like all the Wh-questions, these two are related. How we do an action also tells us a lot about Why? It allows us to see the feeling that is under the action. How also fits the action to the space and to the style of the story. For example, when we are in a large theatre, we must speak loudly and use big gestures, but if we are acting for the camera or in a small space, our voices become quieter and our gestures smaller. If we are acting in a comedy, the How changes. For example, if we cry in a sad story, we would do it like this, but if we cry in a comic story, we might do it like this.

Exercise: "Adverbs" While one of you is out of the room, the others will choose an adverb from the list below. When the person outside comes in, he or she will call on various class members to do a certain action in the manner of the adverb chosen. After giving at least one action to every other member of the class, he or she will guess the adverb. In addition to an action, the person guessing will also indicate the style of the action, whether comic or realistic.

**ADVERBS:** angrily sleepily proudly sexily gracefully clumsily bravely fearfully joyfully excitedly nervously sneakily hurriedly cruelly tiredly menacingly royally calmly drunkenly playfully shyly jealously crazily worriedly forcefully noisily enthusiastically

#### **(BEGINNING LEVELS AND UP)**

Exercise: "The Language of Consonants and Vowels" Different English sounds can create different feelings. Some are staccato like a drum, some are liquid like water. In this exercise, half the class will choose two consonants; half will choose two vowels. From these you will make a language. Use the tone of your voice and the quality of your two sounds to communicate with other members of the class.



Now, switch. Those people who had consonants, choose vowels. Those people who had vowels, choose two consonants.

**(BEGINNING LEVELS AND UP)**

Exercise: "Please & No" Do the following dialogue:

A: Please B: No

A: Please B: No

A: Please B: No

A: Please B: No

A: Please B: Maybe

Change the meaning of the word each time. Don't say it with the same subtext twice.

After you have practiced, you will perform it for the class.

Class: After each word of the dialogue. You will write an adverb that describes the way in which the word was said.

Assignment for Class Tomorrow:

Work with a partner. Do the same dialogue you did in class. But this time, predict just how you will say the word.

And under each word explain the Why, the motivation, underlying the word. Copy this plan and give everyone in the class a copy so we can see if you have followed your plan.

EXAMPLE:

A: Please

(Shyly: Because I am afraid to ask)

B: No

(Sympathetically because you feel sorry for A)

A: Please

(Proudly: Because you know you would only ask when it was necessary.)

B: No

(Surprisedly because you can't believe A would ask again after you had already said "No.")

A: Please

(Playfully: Because you think B can be joked into saying "Yes.")

B: No

(Laughingly because you think A is funny to keep

trying)

A: Please

(Pleadingly: Because you really, really need the help)

B: No

(Impatiently because you are really tired of this.)

A: Please

(Exasperatedly: Because you can't believe A won't help you).

B: Maybe

(Sadistically because you want revenge for all the bother.)

**(INTERMEDIATE LEVELS AND UP)**

AFTER YOU HAVE PLANNED YOUR SEQUENCE OF MOTIVATIONS, WRITE A SHORT EXPLANATION, GIVING THE BACKGROUND OF THIS SCENE. WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE, WHAT ARE THEY DOING, WHERE ARE THEY, WHEN IS THE TIME, WHAT PROBLEM ARE THEY TRYING TO SOLVE?

WRITING EXERCISE: TELL STUDENTS TO BRING A PICTURE TO CLASS OF AN INTERESTING LOOKING PERSON FROM A NEWSPAPER OR MAGAZINE. IN CLASS, HAVE STUDENTS DEFINE THE QUESTION WORDS.

HAVE STUDENTS IDENTIFY THE MOMENT IN THE PERSON'S LIFE THAT DID THE MOST TO DEFINE HIS/HER CHARACTER. DESCRIBE THE MOMENT, EITHER ORALLY IN A SMALL GROUP OR FOR A WRITING ASSIGNMENT.

HAVE STUDENTS DEVELOP A WAY OF MOVING, WALKING, DOING AND SPEAKING AS DEMONSTRATED IN PANTOMIMED ACTION AND SIMPLE DIALOGUE.

HAVE TWO STUDENTS WORK TOGETHER AND LET THEM PLAN AN ENCOUNTER BETWEEN THEIR TWO CHARACTERS.

DAY 6: BEGINNING TO WRITE

- I. Divide into skit groups. Review writing process
  - A. What are the Questions Words?
  - B. Which one will be the starting Words?
  - C. What style of skit do you want?
  - D. What is the Problem? the Solution?
  - E. Does the skit have a beginning, middle, and end?

- II Schedule:
- First Session: Come to class with Who, What doing, How, Where, When, Why, Problem and Solution decided.
  - Second Session: Students hand in scenario of story divided into scenes.  
(Example: Scene 1: Living room; midnight on Christmas Eve; Little Girl captures Santa Claus and holds him until he gives her everything in his bag.)
  - Third Session: Students render story in dialogue for each scene.
  - Fourth Session: Blocking (movement, action) is very specifically decided.
  - Fifth Session: Students perform skits for other groups; critiqued.
  - Sixth Session: Dress rehearsal with costumes and props.
  - Seventh Session: Performance