

Teaching EAL/D through the Arts (VicTESOL)

National Gallery of Victoria - 17 March, 2023

Session summaries and tips

Focus artwork



Venkat Raman Singh SHYAM

The world of the Gonds 2017

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

125.0 x 91.0 cm

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased NGV Foundation, 2019

2019.661

© Venkat Shyam, courtesy of Minhazz Majumdar

<https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/141793/>

Performative language teaching tips

- Start slowly with a gentle warm up or two
- Change the space (e.g. move tables and chairs to outside of room)
- Participate yourself (with enthusiasm)
- If working with teenagers or adults, make language outcomes explicit (or elicit these from learners). E.g. *What language were we practising in this activity?*
- Elicit regular reflections from teens/adults e.g. *What skills are we developing?*
- Encourage rather than enforce participation. Resistant students can participate by doing other tasks. e.g. handing out song words, directing a scene, observing and taking notes. Avoid singling students out or putting them on the spot (there is safety in small groups).
- Focus on the learning rather than the quality of the acting/ dancing/ singing.
- Establish class rules about personal space/ contact, supporting each other, etc.

Plenary session

Warm ups:

Shake out: (using voice projection, energy, confidence) Shaking and counting each limb (right arm, left arm, right leg, left leg) 8 times, then 4, 2, 1, then a big 'Woohoo!!'

Humming- Hum together, then open to various vowel sounds. E.g. Mmmmmmmeeeee, Mmmmmoooo Mmmmmaaaaah. This brings the voice out of the throat and helps it to resonate. Hum first to bring the voice forward, then open into a sentence such as "My name is..." (students can do a throwing action as they 'throw' their voices with these sentences).

Strike a pose: Have all students strike a pose to express how they are feeling at the beginning of the lesson. This can be repeated at the end of the lesson to allow for reflection and see whether anything has shifted for them as a result of the activities. This might lead to a written reflection or to verbal sharing of reflections in small groups.

Video shown: *Can the Arts help you learn a language?* Created by Rachael Jacobs and Erika Piazzoli: https://youtu.be/ltls_UtJQgU

Drama workshop (Facilitator: Jodie Whitehurst)

Language/skills focus: instructional language (imperatives and prepositional phrases, e.g. '*Turn your head to the right*'), present continuous, future continuous, vocabulary from the painting: 'The world of the Gonds' by Venkat Raman Singh Shyam, spontaneous language of collaboration/ negotiation/ making suggestions, teamwork, non-verbal expression, making predictions.

Warm ups:

- **Synchronised passing the clap-** standing in a circle, a clap gets passed around the circle in a chosen direction. The person who starts, turns to the person next to them, makes eye contact and both people must try to clap at the same time without verbal communication. The recipient of the clap then turns to the next person and does the same and so it continues around the circle. The aim should be to create a strong sense of focus amongst the group and to develop a steady rhythm.
- **Command chant;** One person demonstrates a simple action while calling out a corresponding command, e.g. *lift your arms, turn your head to the right*, etc. The rest of the group then chants back the command while repeating the demonstrated action. Aim for high energy, vocal projection and synchronised chanting.

Note: you can make a visible list of the language from this game: e.g. **verbs-** *lift, turn, look, put, point*, etc and **prepositional phrases-** *in the air, to your left, on your hips, at the floor*, etc to be used in the 'sculpting' activity later.

- **10 second object-** Ask learners to move around the space. You might wish to use music to inspire movement and/or you can ask them to walk in particular ways e.g. *slowly; excitedly; like a tiger in the forest; as though you are on your way to a dreaded meeting*, etc. Then at random intervals, call out both a number and the name of an object, e.g. *'Four.....drum!'*. The students then have to quickly form groups of four and use their bodies to create that object together in 10 seconds. The game continues as you call out different numbers.

Things to note:

- It's important to establish ground rules about not making physical contact with others during the game (for covid safety and personal space).
- You can use the game to revise or introduce target vocabulary.
- It's a great way to get students into groups for the next planned activity. Simply finish with groups of your desired number.

Main activities

We worked with the painting: *The World of the Gonds* by Venkat Raman Singh Shyam.

- **Verbal sculpting-** in pairs/groups one person becomes a sculptor and uses verbal instructions to get their partner or group members to move their bodies into a shape to represent: an object, a still image of a scene, an abstract representation of an emotion, etc. In our workshop, we created sculptures of emotions we had previously identified in the painting. These sculptures then became part of an art exhibition and the sculptors were able to wander through and observe the various artworks.
- **Still images-** in groups, have your students look at the painting and make a prediction about what will be happening one day later: *Will they have arrived at their destination? What will they be doing? How will they be feeling?* They then need to work collaboratively to create a still image (like a photograph with their bodies) to visually represent this. They can become people, animals and/or inanimate objects in their still images. Today we also transformed scarves into objects or costume items.
As groups present, classmates describe each image using a specified tense e.g. future continuous, e.g. *They will be building a new home in the forest.*
- **Thought tracking-** This technique is an extension of the still image (above). As a group shows their image, each character/inanimate object in the still image briefly voices their thoughts as the teacher taps their shoulder or clicks/claps near them. This can be spontaneous or you may prefer to give students time to think about it first.

Dance Workshop (Facilitator: Sally Smith)

Language/Skills Focus:

Instructional language (Imperatives), learning vocabulary of colours, body parts, seasons, adverbs, sequencing of instructions, presentation skills, confidence and community building through movement explorations and collaborations.

Warm up:

Painting/writing in the space:

Choose a colour from the focus painting: *The World of the Gonds* by Venkat Raman Singh Shyam.

'Paint' the space with your colour using different body parts.

Write the name of your colour in the air in front of you.

Start with your writing hand pointer finger, then try.... Left elbow, right kneecap, pelvis, top of head etc

You can choose a new colour and write your name with it.

What other words can you write with your colours, using different body parts?

e.g. Joy, community, love, pattern, colour, tiger, parade

Now try painting with different qualities:

Excitedly, sleepily, furiously, slowly, reluctantly etc

*This exercise of writing with different body parts could be used to learn any vocabulary, practise spelling a group of words. How could you use it in your class?

Main activities:

The NGV Boogie (or whatever name you want to give it)

Spread out in the space in a loose grid formation.

Demonstrate the dance to the students, using the language from the instructions as you do so.

Play upbeat music of choice and perform all together, turning to all four sides.

Observe and clarify any misunderstandings about the movements.

Perform a second time to give a chance for improvements/corrections. Big round of applause!

Using the cut up dance instructions, put students into groups of 2-3. Put the instructions for the dance in the correct order.

*This leads well into identifying and learning about the features of instructional language.

You can take this basic dance and add gestures to give it a theme, e.g. Halloween (with Zombie arms, claws etc)

Walk forwards x 4 steps

Clap x 1

Walk backwards x 4 steps

Clap x 1

REPEAT

Point your right foot x 2 to the right side

Point your left foot x 2 to the left side

Point your right foot x 1 to the right side

Point your left foot x 1 to the left side

Jump $\frac{1}{4}$ turn to your right

Shimmy

Start again from the beginning

Parades:

Looking at the painting, what are the people doing? It looks like it could be a parade or procession.

Fashion parade (this is great preparation for student presentations, making 'up the front' feel more comfortable).

Demonstrate a simple walk to the front of the classroom, present to the 'audience' with simple open armed pose, then exit.

Play some upbeat music your students would like to move to.

Do in a round robin style, one student at a time moving through and 'claiming' the front of the classroom space.

Learn The Nelken Line' by Pina Bausch.

Now we're going to learn a dance sequence that is also a kind of procession.

Thinking about the four seasons, what gestures could you use to capture the feeling of each season? Discuss in small groups.

Here you can prompt students about 'What do we do when we feel cold in Winter?' (Shiver, cross arms and hold)

What makes us so hot in Summer? (Sun in the sky)

What happens to the leaves in Autumn? (Falling gesture)

What starts to grow in Spring? (Flowers, grass, plants growing up from the ground).

It doesn't matter what gestures the students come up with. It's great for them to consider how to express seasons with gestures.

Teach the gestures to The Nelken Line. See youtube tutorial below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MZI4cgGRhzE>

What gestures would you like to make a dance from? You could elicit gestures from your students to fit a particular theme. Just four gestures repeated with walking in unison looks so effective.

See how people from all ages, nationalities and walks of life learned this dance for 'The Nelken Line Project'.

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=the+nelken+line+project

Song Workshop (Facilitators - Carmel Davies & Sharon Duff)

Vocal Warm ups: stretches with deep breaths / shoulder rolls / AEIOU low to high – soft to loud

A) Theme The World of the Gonds by Venkat Raman Singh Shyam

Beginners : Ask the question - What can you see? (Answer) I can see...
Discuss for one minute in pairs then share with group E.g. children - a woman or mother- a tiger - a sun or moon - a house - a big tree - different colours

Higher levels: Brainstorm the themes of the painting e.g. community, family, home, transport, safety, nature, the environment

Step in / step out game to share ideas with group

B) Songs (chosen to reflect above themes)

1. Beginner - It's nice to see you (Sing with me! Book 1)

Language focus: Common greetings, adjectives, WH questions, present simple tense - verb to be

Introduction: Look at a few images of people greeting each other.

How do you greet someone in your country? What do you say?

Activity: Hold the lyrics (written on cards) yourself (or write them on the board)

Ask students to read the lines of the lyrics and check understanding

Organise students into 3 groups. (Each group is allocated a line)

Pronunciation focus: Sentence stress

Play the first verse for students to hear the lyrics and melody.

Hand out only the words that are stressed.

Play the first verse for the second time - students hold up the stressed words when they hear them.

Play the song again and ask each group to sing their lines.

Repeat the step above then move onto the next verse in the same manner.

Shift cards around each group so all students get a chance to practise each verse.

2. Advanced - We really really want to buy a house (Sing with me! Book 3)

Introduction: house and home in the painting

Activity: word cards – students get one each and predict the right word order (standing in line) then listen and check.

Sing whole song together with word cues then without word cues (find an action to assist memory).

Pronunciation Focus: a. linking b. 2 syllable word stress c. slang (diminutives) e.g. veggies

Decide how many verses to teach your students. Depending on language levels do the whole or part of the song. Teach the rest during the next lesson. (This helps revise skills.)

C) Call and response

Sing or play 2 -4 lines of verses or a chorus from a song - students repeat
We chose the following songs to echo the themes in *The World of the Gonds* by Venkat Raman Singh Shyam

Family - I'm not sleeping

Language focus - present continuous

3 am and I'm not sleeping

4am I'm still not sleeping

I miss my mum

I miss my home

I miss my friends

Environment - Let's change

Language focus – let's for suggestions

Let's change let's change

Yeah keep the planet cool

Change change change

Don't be a fool

Friendship - I left my home

Language focus – simple past tense

I left my home

and flew over the sea

to start again

to be free to be free

Tip: Sing a few lines of various songs regularly in class to improve fluency and speaking skills.

D) Write your own song

Listen to *The Tiger Smiles** inspired by The World of the Gonds

In a circle, listen and repeat line by line. Use body percussion plus instruments with gesture and dance. Now in groups of 4 or 5 write your own song using the painting as inspiration.

You will need:

1. A theme (the art work in this case)
2. Relevant vocabulary
3. A grammar focus
4. Rhyming verse
5. One or two gestures per line
6. A familiar tune if you don't have to worry about copyright

Then....

Let's SING!

**Written by Carmel Davies and performed by Kavisha Mazella to the tune of 'Do You Wanna Dance' by Bobby Freeman.*

Have further questions? Contact details below:

Sharon Duff and Carmel Davies: urbanlyrebirds@gmail.com

Sally Smith: thedancesmith@yahoo.com.au

Jodie Whitehurst: jodie@thelanguagescene.com.au

For more resources, articles and information on workshops/books visit:

www.urbanlyrebirds.com

www.thelanguagescene.com.au

To join the mailing list for *The Language Scene* scan QR code below:

