

**LET'S GET ALL OUR DUCKS IN A ROW:  
DESIGNING DRAMA-SMART LEARNING  
AND TEACHING**

**HAYDİ TÜM ÖRDEKLERİMİZİ BİR SIRAYA TOPLAYALIM:  
AKILLI DRAMA ÖĞRENİMİ VE ÖĞRETİMİ TASARLAMAK**

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**Abstract**

This article argues for a drama-smart approach to learning in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language and proposes a pedagogical model, "Drama Smart Learning" (DSL) based on a blended use of creative drama and role play, creating a continuum of drama activities from simple to complex. The first half of the article makes a case for drama-based pedagogy as a structured and systematic approach to learning by way of introduction, followed by what DSL means and its benefits. Next is a discussion of the four common types of drama work in order to further clarify the scope of the approach in terms of its key components. The second half of the article is a practical section, presenting an original task entitled *The Duck Family*. This practical section includes the description of various activities that can be designed around the topic of the Duck Family providing detailed classroom procedures for teachers to be able to use them in their classes both with young and adult learners. Additional comments are offered along with some teaching tips for developing more drama activities. The final part summarizes the argument of the article and offers educational implications and concluding remarks.

**Keywords:** Drama-smart learning, creative drama and drama activities.

**Özet**

Bu makale, drama kullanımı içeren bir yaklaşım olarak Yabancı Dil olarak İngilizce Eğitiminde pedagojik bir model önermektedir. Bu "Akıllı Drama Öğrenimi" modeli, yaratıcı drama ve rol yapma tekniklerini basitten zora bir bütün içinde barındıran bir pedagojik modeldir. Makalenin birinci yarısı giriş olarak, bu modelin sistematik ve belli bir yapı içinde olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Bundan sonraki tartışma, makalede önerilen yaklaşımın daha iyi anlaşılması için bu yaklaşımın temelini oluşturan dört esas unsuru ele almaktadır. Makalenin ikinci yarısı uygulamalı bölüm olup, orijinal olarak tasarlanmış olan "Ördek Ailesi" aktivitesini sunmaktadır. Bu bölüm, Ördek ailesi konusundan yola çıkarak genç ve yetişkin öğrencilerle kullanılabilir çeşitli aktiviteleri betimleyip ayrıntılı şekilde sınıf içi yöntemlerini anlatmaktadır. Ayrıca, öğretmenlere yönelik farklı drama aktiviteleri tasarlamak amacıyla, yararlı tavsiyelere yer verilmiştir. Son bölüm, makalede önerilen savın kısa bir özetini yaparak, sonuç ve eğitim için öneriler sunmaktadır.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Akıllı drama öğrenimi, yaratıcı drama ve drama aktiviteleri

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### **1. Introduction**

Drama is not a new teaching approach in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (DiNapoli, 2009, p.99). A quick review of the relevant literature reveals a continuing interest in the use of drama in language teaching since the 1970s in a wide range of contexts (See Dodson, 2000 for a detailed review of how drama developed into a teaching tool). The use of drama as a teaching strategy in EFL began to develop in tandem with the advent of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), in the 1970s following the need to distinguish between drama and theatre in the 1950s and 60s, particularly voiced by Dorothy Heathcote (Baldwin, 2008; Brouillette, 2012; Gül Peker, 2010; Heathcote and Herbert, 1986; Hui and Lau, 2006; Jindal-Snape, Vettraino, Lowson and McDuff, 2011; Lee, Patall, Cawthon and Setingut, 2015; Lin, 2010; Lynch, 1977; Maley and Duff, 1996, Sam, 1990; Via, 1976; Wagner, 1976). Arguably, it is possible to enhance “the social, intellectual and linguistic development” of EFL learners and enable communication by means of different kinds of drama work (Dougill, 1994, p.3; Phillips, 2000). This is a kind of communication in which “language comes alive through drama” which shows that communication “is not only about words and structure and pronunciation, but feelings, motivations and meanings” (Miccoli, 2003, p.128).

And yet, in most teaching contexts, the relationship between drama and language teaching has remained “one-sided” with mostly the teacher responsible for any performance and learners as “spectators” (Dougill, 1994, p. 25). There appear to be reasons that are perhaps not discussed as openly and zealously as one would wish. First of all, it remains dubious whether tasks intended as role play in most EFL textbooks can teach genuine communication through dialogs in which essential aspects of communication such as “hesitations, interruptions, distractions, misunderstandings, and even silences” are given little attention (Wessels, 1993, p.11). A further overlooked aspect of textbook dialogs is that there is usually no dramatic tension which draws on a conflict presented as a problem to be solved with young learners or a more abstract problem much like in ordinary real-life conversations with older learners. Conflict is, in fact, “the main ingredient in dramatic structure” particularly in improvisation and role-playing (Beall Heinig, 1993, p.23). It then becomes the responsibility of teachers to incorporate dramatic structure into ordinary textbook dialogs claiming to be dramatic. And yet, teachers may shy away from incorporating such structure into their teaching due to their existing beliefs that they lack training in drama (Burke and O’Sullivan, 2002; Yaşar, 2006).

A second reason may have to do with the prevalence of traditional and authoritarian Turkish cultural norms of behavior that can prevent teachers and learners from using drama work which operates in a more liberal, creative context without a need to elicit true-for-all answers. Yet another reason could be that for teachers who are willing to have their learners engage in drama work, it may not be easy for them to “find teacher-friendly material” (Burke and O’Sullivan, 2002, xxii).

Most importantly however, there seems to be a lack of commonly agreed on pedagogical model for drama work (Griggs, 2001) that presents a structured and systematic approach which not only includes elements of the world of theater but also considers linguistic and non-linguistic aims with use for both young and adult learners of EFL. A recent article (Lee, Patall, Cawthon and Setingut, 2015) investigating the effects of drama-based pedagogy in English language arts, science, reading, social studies and mathematics classes makes a call for researchers and teachers to investigate practices “that can facilitate the meaningful, intentional, and effective use of drama-based pedagogy” (p.41).

Thus, despite major potential benefits of doing drama work in EFL classes, it remains yet to find a pedagogical model that is not only structured and systematic but is also teacher-

friendly. This article presents a theoretical basis and detailed classroom procedures for such a model with the aim of establishing a drama smart learning approach. Arguably, if teachers develop such a repertoire of drama, then this can lead to an environment which can host both drama smart teachers and learners.

## 2. Understanding the Drama Smart Learning Approach and Its Benefits

### 2.1. Understanding the Drama- Smart Learning Approach

An essential quality of drama work in the EFL classroom is that both creative drama and drama are process oriented (Cotrell, 1987). Contrary to what most people think, drama in the classroom is not performance (Baldwin, 2008; Dougill, 1994). In other words, the aim of engaging learners in drama work is not to perform and produce “an end-of term play (Phillips, 2000, p.5) in which success is determined how good learners are in terms of performance like in a theatre play. Rather, it is the direct experience that the learners are engaged in that can enable learning (Neelands, 2002; Wessels, 1993). This is a process which respects how involved learners are in terms of ideas and creativity. As Vygotsky (2004) notes, the creative process is more important than the product to be created as the value of creativity “lies not in its results, not in the product of creation, but in the process itself” (p. 72). This process-centered approach is the sine qua non of a drama-smart approach to learning.

In such an approach to learning, learners “are guided by a leader to imagine, enact, and reflect upon human experience” (Beall Heinig, 1993, p. 4). This drama leader is often the teacher who can help learners to work out their own meanings or interpretations in a most spontaneous way, the result of which may be a crude performance as a result of their involvement in the process of learning.

### 2.2. Benefits of drama-smart learning

*“The intuitive mind is a sacred gift, the rational mind a faithful servant. It is paradoxical that in the context of modern life we have begun to worship the servant and defile the divine.”*

Albert Einstein (cited in Grinder, 1989, p. 39)

The benefits of becoming drama-smart teachers and learners are manifold. This article draws on five major non-linguistic and linguistic benefits. DSL can involve learners in the lesson by motivating them more, stimulate the imagination and promote critical and creative thinking; and promote awareness of feelings and increase empathy and awareness of others. Drama work can also enhance language development.

The first major non-linguistic benefit of DSL is that can help learners to become involved in the lesson by increasing their motivation (Sam, 1990). Not only pantomime activities, but also activities such as role-play and simulation require physical activity (Dougill, 1994; Maley and Duff, 1996; Neelands and Goode, 2000). This, in turn, requires active participation with the result that learners will not have to remain passive during the process of learning. As they will be active, they will be enjoying these activities and having fun. Learners who are less motivated will also be “gradually drawn into the activity” when they realize that their classmates are having a good time” (Sam, 1990, p.127). Shy learners can also participate more once they gain confidence and see that they are successful (Greenfader and Brouillette, 2013). Active participation in classroom activities can, as reported in a research study, “lead to greater concentration on learning materials” (Gorjian, Moosavinia and Jabripour, 2010, p. 9). Similarly, a Turkish study reveals that the use of drama in teaching can increase learner motivation and interest, particularly for adult learners (Kalıpcı, 2016).

A second non-linguistic benefit of DSL is that it can stimulate the imagination and promote critical and creative thinking (Cotrell, 1987). Drama work can particularly help the development of a child's imagination as it "promotes the use of mental imagery" (Mages, 2006, p.336). In terms of creative thinking, it is accepted that each child has creative potential; however, this potential "needs to be released and given a nurturing environment to develop fully" (Beall Heinig, 1993, p. 9). Drama work can be a great means of nurturing creativity. A recent research study by Hui and Lau (2011) reports that the drama education project increased the creativity of elementary school children of Grades 1 to 4 in Hong Kong. Similar findings are echoed in a study by Lin (2010) who demonstrates that the Taiwanese pupils "considered drama useful in developing certain creative abilities and qualities, such as imagination, independent thinking, and risk-taking" (p.108).

A third non-linguistic benefit of DSL is that it can help learners to learn to think critically. As activities are open-ended, learners may have options to choose from and act on, which in turn can help them to design their own movements or dialogs. These ideas can be different or similar to the ones that their peers suggest. A comparison of their ideas can help raise awareness of different viewpoints on the same issue. Children also learn about new ideas along with new language or vocabulary. When children learn words in a language, they also learn about many other ideas that are connected to those words. Thus, in this sense, language serves as a tool for the refinement of ideas, hence a venue for critical thinking not only for children but also for adults (Eggen and Kauchak, 1999).

Fourth, DSL can involve learners at an emotional level. In particular, it can promote awareness of feelings and at the same time increase empathy and awareness of others (Cotrell, 1987). Creative drama is a great tool for enabling "an understanding of emotional issues" as reported in a research study (Jindal-Snape et. al., 2011, p. 383) which argues that the use of creative drama helped learners "to take ownership of their feelings" (ibid, p. 386). DSL can also facilitate the learning of empathy. As young learners and adults engage in the exploration of different lifestyles and viewpoints of people in different contexts, they can learn to understand and empathize with them. This becomes all the more important given that the exploration of feelings does not receive much attention if any at all, in most classroom drama activities dictated by textbook dialogs. Most textbook dialogs usually focus on "surface reality" and are undramatic; that is to say, they are "static" (Dougill, 1994, p.17) and because of this structure, learners tend to concentrate more on the correct production of grammatical structures. As a result, there is often "a lack affective component" (DiNapoli, 2009, p. 101). If this is the case, then drama work will fall short of engaging the whole person (Heathcote and Herbert, 1986). Thus, the balance between cognitive and affective attributes of genuine communication will not be enabled.

Finally, DSL can be used to promote language development, which is as important as the non-linguistic benefits mentioned. Language development envisages learning both vocabulary items and functions of the target language which can be enabled as learners "physicalize" the language (Greenfader and Brouillette, 2013, p. 172). Using movement and gesture can help learners to learn and recall the vocabulary items that are taught in class. In addition to movement, pantomime is a great technique to use in order to elicit the new vocabulary and language. Learners can watch their peers mime words and actions. When they describe what is being acted out, fluency is fostered (Dodson, 2000). In fact, a recent Turkish study shows that drama-based pedagogy can enhance adult learners' speaking skills (Pesen, 2016). Thus, during the process of engagement in drama work, learners not only get a chance to express themselves but also find opportunities to discuss their ideas with their peers and interact with them. This process in turn, "motivates the learners to become more effective in their use of language" (Beall Heinig,

1993, p.7). When learners are actively engaged as such in drama work, the focus is on the meaning rather than the form of language. This ascribes drama its communicative attribute since it is “student-centered and meaning-based” (Dodson, 2000, p.129). In EFL, drama is usually considered as a technique for enabling communication in the target language in line with the underlying philosophy of CLT which entails written or oral communication as in the real world and using language for real life purposes (Burke and O’Sullivan, 2002; Dodson, 2000; Dougill, 1994; Sam, 1990).

In sum, a drama-smart model of learning and teaching offers both non-linguistic and linguistic benefits. The next section discusses the types of activities that can be designed in order to achieve the afore mentioned aims.

### **3. Drama-Smart Learning Tasks**

This article focuses on the use of both creative drama and drama in the teaching of EFL. It argues that by incorporating creative drama and drama activities into our classes, we can enable the spontaneous and creative expression of the individual with ease (McCaslin, 1990). It argues that such learning can be enhanced by starting with simple creative drama activities and moving towards more elaborate and dynamic improvisation and role play tasks, hence a continuum of learning based on dramatic activity. Working on such a continuum, drama activities can start with controlled practice which is usually working with dialogs. Then, the drama leader can gradually help learners to move towards a freer stage in which they can “try out the newly learnt language in situations that approximate to real life and in which they are free to choose how to formulate what they want to say” (Dougill, 1994, p. 59). With this aim in mind, the present article demonstrates how a simple creative drama activity can be used with YLEs and adults and then redesigned for elaborate drama work for EFL at higher levels of proficiency.

This article suggests four types of DSL learning tasks as key components of DSL that can easily be integrated into teaching, namely, pantomime, creative movement, improvisation and role-playing (Beall Heinig, 1993; Burke and O’Sullivan, 2002; Dodson, 2000; Dougill, 1994; Gül Peker, 2010; Lynch, 1977; Maley and Duff, 1996; Neelands, 2002; Neelands and Goode, 2000; Phillips, 2000; Wessels, 1993). The first reason for the inclusion of these activities is that they can be used at any stage of the lesson with any level of learners. A second reason is that, as mentioned previously, simple, short and easy creative movement and pantomime activities designed as warm up or pre- activities to be used at pre- listening and reading stages, can easily be redesigned as improvisation or role play activities to be used at post- listening and reading stages with any level of learners (Gül Peker, 2010) (For teachers looking for a step-by-step, practical manual for drama activities, see Burke and O’Sullivan, Dougill, 1994; Gül Peker, 2010; Heathcote and Herbert, 1986 ; Maley and Duff, 1996; McCaslin, 1990; Neelands, 2000; Wessels, 1993).

#### *3.1. Pantomime*

Pantomime, the first key component of DSL, is “a non verbal representation of an idea or story through gesture, bodily movement and expression” (Dougill, 1994, p. 13) and is something that we engage in very frequently. In fact, as reported by National Education Association, it is argued that about 80% of all classroom communication is non-verbal (Grinder 1991, p.165). A major benefit of using pantomime with YLEs and adults is that it is a low risk or activity as it does not require language and it is simple and fun. For this reason, it provides a safe and enjoyable way of initiating into the world of drama (Dodson, 2000; Dougill, 1994; Isbell and Raines, 2013; McCaslin, 1990).

The most common types of miming activities consist of simple mimes and mimed scenes (Dougill, 1994). Such activities can be used at any stage of the lesson, particularly as warm-up activities (For more ideas on using pantomime with younger children, see Burke and O'Sullivan, 2002; Cotrell, 1987; Dougill, 1994; Gül Peker, 2010; McCaslin, 1990; Phillips, 2000). Simple mimes can be elaborated on and designed as mimed scenes which can then be the basis for a further role play activity. Activities such as miming animals, objects or seasons would be excellent for preschool children as well as young learners of Grades 1-6. "Mime a Monster" (Phillips, 2000, pp. 13-14) is a good example of such simple activities. The well-known game, "Charades", would also be a good miming activity (Dodson, 2000). With older learners, Grades 6-8, mimed scenes such as an incident during a robbery, a birthday party or waiting at the bus stop are fun. Learners can prepare for the mimed scene in small groups. Each group can then act out while their peers try to guess what scene is being mimed. As learners try to describe what is happening, other class members can guess. This technique can be used to present or practice specific language functions and vocabulary items (Dougill, 1994; Dodson, 2000; Gül Peker, 2010; Wessels, 1993).

It should be noted however, that, in order to do miming well, learners need to be familiarized with the features of objects and actions to be mimed. The best way of familiarizing them is by means of teacher questions. For instance, if learners are going to mime putting on a warm coat in order to go out for a walk, the teacher can help them with such questions: Where is your coat? How do you reach for it? How do you put on your coat it? What do you do after you put it on?

### *3.2. Creative movement*

The second key component of DSL is creative movement. Defined as a "natural response to a stimulus", it is a crucial "element of drama" (McCaslin, 1990, p.50). Children learning languages like movement because "the physicality of movement circumvents children's disadvantages in verbal skills" (McCaslin, 1990, p.51). In addition, as mentioned previously, children derive pleasure from physical activity as use of their bodies is their way of expressing emotions and giving information.

The basis of creative movement is dance and rhythmic movement. Much like the warm-ups that actors do, children can engage in walking, skipping, hopping, running or jumping. Such movements can also be done to the accompaniment of recorded music or the teacher's beating out a rhythm (McCaslin, 1990) (See Maley and Duff, 1996 for the activities, "Beat out That Rhythm", p. 53). Two further enjoyable creative movement activities are "From Seed to Plant", (ibid, p.58); and "Becoming a Musical Instrument", (ibid, p.65-66). "From Seed to Plant" is an activity in which learners can have fun and at the same time express their emotions. Again, when learners are imitating the growing of a seed into a plant, the teacher can use soft music to accompany her instructions.

Another example of creative movement activities is imitating the movement of various animals. Learners can try crawling like a crocodile, prancing like a horse, leaping like a frog or hopping like a rabbit. As in the preparation for miming activities, the teacher, as the drama leader, can prepare learners for the creative movement activities that they will be doing by imitating (Beall Heinig, 1993; Dougill; 1994; Wessels; 1993) for example by showing learners some pictures of various animals. Then the teacher or the drama leader can elicit the various movements that are particular to those animals and get learners to imitate these movements.

Yet another example of an excellent creative drama activity is producing sounds. One possible procedure is to imitate the sounds that animals make. Young children love mooing like cows or meowing like cats. These are simple miming activities and little

preparation for teaching is necessary. The learners will not only learn to associate sounds with animals but they can also practice pronunciation and intonation by imitating the animal sounds. An alternative procedure would be to try out the sounds with different feelings. For example, learners can experiment with the feelings of *sad*, *angry* or *embarrassed* (Burke and O’Sullivan; 2002; Cotrell, 1987; McCaslin, 1990). This can be turned into an activity called *The Emotional Orchestra*, in which the teacher acts as the orchestra conductor and has groups produce the different sounds of the assigned feelings. Adults can also enjoy this activity. In fact, what gives drama its special value “is the combined mental, physical, vocal and emotional involvement” of the learners (McCaslin, 1990, p.53).

### 3.3. *Improvisation*

The third key component of DSL, improvisation, is “a spontaneous response to the unfolding of an unexpected situation” (Hodgson and Richards, cited in Dougill, 1994, p. 19). Improvising may be somewhat threatening for some teachers who may associate it with unrehearsed performance. However, it should be borne in mind that improvisation is not something that we are unfamiliar with as the ability to improvise is an important component of the ability to use language in daily life. When children have had some experience with drama work, particularly after age 8, they can start to improvise scenes. When the teacher and their learners are just beginning to get familiar with DSL approach, pantomime can be used and when the learners are ready, dialogs can be added. The teacher or the drama leader in a DSL approach can help with the choice of topic. Topics can be selected from stories or films that learners are already familiar with. Other topics can be taken from short stories, fairy tales and fables and television shows and commercials (Beall Heinig, 1993).

Simple improvisations could be designed as based on situations, objects, costumes and characters. For example, the teacher could provide an object and ask learners to observe it. Then, the teacher can guide the learners in thinking about its origin, present use and then ask learners to create a story with those details (See McCaslin, 1990 for further ideas on how to do improvisations). As the emphasis is on fluency and creativity, learners will not only be using language freely, but they will also be enjoying themselves.

Improvising scenes can also help learners to draw on their own experiences. When learners use their own voices “to dramatize the characters’ words and actions”, they can get “a sense of how interactions among the characters shaped the events described in the story” (Greenfader and Brouillette, 2013, p.173). In this way, learners can understand the plot and the feelings of the characters in a particular text, although they may not comprehend the text entirely. Simple situations with few characters can be chosen for young learners whilst it would be better to choose situations in which there are more characters.

### 3.4. *Role-play*

This article argues that role-playing can be the final destination point on the continuum of drama work in a DSL approach. It suggests that once learners have had experience with basic drama work and have become comfortable with pantomime and creative movement and feel less inhibited in enacting scenes and creating dialogs and improvising, the teacher can introduce the technique of role-playing (Beall Heinig, 1993) as the fourth component in the continuum. In simple terms, role-playing is an activity in which learners are given situations and they act out the scenes “using their own ideas or from ideas and information on role-cards” (Scrivener, 2013, p.155). Arguably, “assuming a role is intrinsic to all human behavior whether in the games of children or the many roles those adults play each day (Dougill, 1994, pp. 16-17).

The aim of a role play activity is “to stimulate the feel of a real-life situation in a classroom (Burke and O’Sullivan, 2002, pp. xiv-xv). For this reason, in any role-play activity, both the surface reality and the underlying reality need to be addressed. Surface reality covers only the situation. Underlying reality, on the other hand, gives background information on the characters, the context, the feelings involved and includes dramatic tension. Unlike the theatre, role-playing is done for the benefit of the learners and can provide opportunities for learners to get into different roles (Wessels, 1993). By trying out different roles, learners can confront and make sense of problems and issues in real life that may otherwise remain unexplored (Lin, 2010). YLEs can also benefit from exploring problems and reaching the most plausible solutions to the problems described in the role play situations.

A major benefit of role playing in the EFL classroom is that “it enables a flow of language to be produced that might be otherwise difficult or impossible to create” (Dougill, 1994, p.17). Role plays work well in all language skills. For example, activities can be used at the pre-reading and listening stages to demonstrate comprehension of different genres of texts (Dodson, 2000). They work equally well in speaking and writing activities.

There is a wide spectrum of role-play activities ranging from the simple and easy to the complex. Miming can be used as an introduction or a warm up to a role-play as learners can use their gestures, mimics and bodies to express hidden feelings or feelings behind their actions or words in a non-verbal manner. It also helps learners to become aware of the fact that “movement carries subtle meanings” (Burke and O’Sullivan, 2002, p.xv). Story dramatization is another form of role-playing.

The most common type of role-play activity in the EFL class is a speaking activity in which learners are assigned roles during the input or pre-task discussion stage with role cards provided for the learners. The learners may act out the given situation in the role cards with or without a script, using the newly learned vocabulary items and/or language functions. Three typical examples of role-playing would be as follows:

- i. Argument between a teenager and his parents about his coming home late;
- ii. Grandmother talking to her grandson and reminiscing about the past and
- iii. Three friends with different views on holidays trying to make a decision on where to spend their summer holiday.

The linguistic aims for each activity would be as follows:

- i. To enable the production of the function of “prohibitions”, “obligations” and “advice” (can-can’t; must- have to-should);
- ii. To enable the production of the function of “past habit” (used to-would) and
- iii. To enable the functions of agreeing and disagreeing (I agree/think that...-I don’t agree/think that...).

To sum up, the four key components of the DSL approach which may be likened to a cube with the four sides corresponding to each key component as can be seen in Figure 1 and Figure 2. It is possible to take one small cube out and use it independently for a particular purpose and on a continuum from simple to complex. Depending on the aim of the task, a teacher can use all the activities in one particular lesson; however, such a decision would necessarily depend on the language level of the learners, their level or readiness and familiarity with drama work.



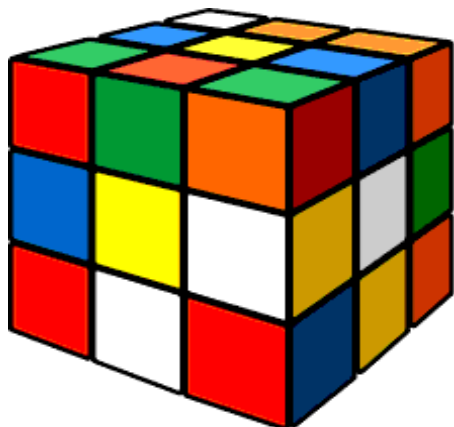


Figure 1. A representation of all four aspects of DSL



Figure 2. A representation one particular aspect of DSL

#### 4. An Original Sample Activity: The Duck Family

This part of the article presents an original activity, called *The Duck Family*, which I designed for use with young learners of English. It was published in a course book written for the National Ministry of Education, a project in which I was involved in as editor and writer (Gül Peker, 2008). The activity was a part of Unit 9, entitled *Success Stories: A Living Scientist*. The aims of the unit were to enable learners to “impart and seek factual information; describe education qualifications and skills and talk about accomplishments” (ibid, p. 101). The activity was designed as a speaking activity for a reading text which informs learners about emotional intelligence (ibid, p. 109)(See Appendix A).

Firstly, I will focus on how we can do a pantomime activity, by working on a simple theme. This activity can be used at any phase of the lesson. Similarly, I will demonstrate how the same activity can be designed as a creative movement activity. I will then show ways of how this simple activity can be developed into a more task-based approach and designed as an improvisation or role play activity in order to promote vocabulary, language development, effective speaking and writing skills. In short, I will argue that the *Duck Family* activity can be designed as pantomime, creative movement and improvisation or role-play. As mentioned in the first half of the article, by the use of pantomime, creative movement improvisation and role-play, learners can not only have fun and use their imaginations in a creative way but also acquire language.

The two versions presented will demonstrate how both the teacher and the learners may work through the different phases of a drama lesson and cater to the development of both linguistic and non-linguistic needs such as creative and critical thinking, awareness of feelings and empathy. The following discussions include the descriptions of the activities, comments and the procedures for implementing them in class.

Figure 3: The Duck Family



4.1. The Duck Family: Activity 1

**Description of the activity:**

- **Objectives:**
  - To review vocabulary of feelings
  - To raise awareness of feelings and empathy
  - To raise awareness of the topic of a reading text on family life (to be done at the pre reading stage)
- **Grade Level:** Young learners and adults
- **Materials:** Picture of a duck family
- **Classroom Setup:** Space in the center of classroom
- **Techniques Used:** Pantomime and creative movement

**Procedure:**

- 1. Activate thoughts on feelings.
- 2. Write the different feelings on the board. E.g. happy, sad, anxious, angry, upset, frustrated etc.
- 3. Show the picture of the Duck Family to the learners. Ask them to observe each character in the picture. There is a mother duck and 5 siblings.
- 4. Acknowledge each response—there is no right or wrong answer here. The fifth duck could be feeling anxious or happy.

- 5. Ask learners to identify one character in the picture and to identify one feeling state that the character may be in.
- 6. Ask learners to imagine being there from the eyes of that character.
- 7. Have learners practice miming different feelings in pairs or groups.
- 8. Ask some learners to perform in front of class (it is best to start with extroverts first). Tell learners that they will now mime the *Duck Family*, using gestures and mimics that reflect that character's feelings. Ask them to use the word "Quack" to reflect their feelings.
- 9. Do a demo with 5 learners, miming the Mother Duck yourself.
- 10. Make groups of 6 learners and have them prepare for a few minutes.
- 11. Have each group mime a short walk in the classroom.
- 12. Give feedback and ask their feelings about the entire activity.

**Helpful Teaching Tips:**

- The material in this activity consists of a simple picture which can be found on the internet or in a children's book. It can be copied on to a poster size paper. It will be better if the picture is in color.
- The picture will remain in a corner of the classroom or on the board during the activity.
- It can also be used in the center of a mind map when doing elicitation of feelings in Step 3 of Procedure.
- All kinds of ideas should be acknowledged and welcomed. There should not be any criticism of learners' ideas. Young children enjoy brainstorming and are quite successful at it (Isbell and Raines, 2013).
- It is better if some space in the center of the classroom is allocated for the activity. However, if there are space constraints, the learners can move from one end of the room to the other.
- It is important to remember that pantomime develops as a skill. Whether it is a kindergarten child pantomiming bouncing a ball, good pantomime is always the result of both thought and practice (Pederson, 1986).
- In terms of language development, the focus can be on feelings for younger learners. However, depending on the level of the learners, that is to say at higher levels, the dialog among the members of the Duck Family can be more complex using more advanced levels of language.
- Adults can also enjoy miming the Duck Family. The photos below show trainees engaged in the activity, taken during a teacher training course.

Figure 4. The Duck Family enacted by teachers on a training course



#### 4.2 The Duck Family: Activity 2

##### Description of the activity:

- **Objectives:**
  - To review vocabulary of feelings
  - To raise awareness of feelings
  - To enable the simulation of real life scenes such as family meetings
  - To enable learners to communicate in a real life situation with a real life purpose
- **Grade Level:** Young learners and adults
  - **Materials:** Picture of a duck family
  - **Classroom Setup:** Space in the center of the classroom
  - **Techniques Used:** Improvisation and role play

##### Procedure:

- 1. Do the steps as in Activity 1.
- 2. Create a context for the Duck Family. It is best to make suggestions. E.g. the Duck Family is on their way to a party or they are returning from a party. Or, they are going for a swim in the pond.
- 3. Add a conflict such as one of the family members not willing to go to the party, or the fact that they have not bought a present for the hostess of the party. This conflict will enable the learners to create real life dialogs.
- 4. Give the groups time to work on their contexts and dialogs. Monitor their preparations by walking from group to group. Help them to plan and organize their work.
- 5. If you want to do this as an improvisation activity, you can start the improvisation by acting as the narrator. You can use a beginning such as: "The Duck Family is going to a party. It is a beautiful day. The Mother Duck thinking to herself, saying, "Oh yes, it is a beautiful day...I am happy to be with my children. And we are

going to a party...” . The learners can then improvise the continuation of this short beginning by getting into their roles.

- 6. The script could also be memorized. If this is the case, then you need to allow some time for the memorization.
- 7. Ask one group to perform in front of the class. Asking for performance is an issue that needs to be handled delicately. Shy learners may need more encouragement while more extroverted learners will be volunteers.
- 8. If the aim is to do a writing task, then the role-play dialog may be written down.
- 9. Give feedback and ask their feelings about the entire activity.

#### **Helpful Teaching Tips:**

- As Wessels (1993) notes, using role play can enable the development of speaking skills in the target language as “drama can generate a need to speak” (p. 9). We can add hesitations, interruptions and misunderstandings to the learners’ dialogs, which, as mentioned previously, are usually part of real-life conversations but not considered in course book dialogs.
- A Useful Language Poster can be put on the blackboard or one of the walls where learners can easily see it. This poster can include examples of newly or recently learned language.

#### **5. Tips for Designing DSL Activities**

- Develop the context roughly in order to allow for freedom of expression. As Heathcote (cited in Wagner, 1976) notes, it is best to allow learners to decide on the main issues in the pantomime or improvisation. However, always discuss and motivate.
- Pair work and group work enable the practice of real-life conversations and ensure that learners are using language for genuine communication as in CLT. If done in pairs, could create and act out a dialog between any two members of the Duck Family. If the aim is to role play the entire Duck Family, then have groups of 6 working together.
- Always give learners time to get into role. Learners’ discussions in groups will enhance creativity and acknowledgement of feelings.
- If you are working with a text, teacher questions can enable the learners to get into role. See Neelands and Goode (2000) for sample questions; and Neelands, (2002) for step-by-step guidance in working with texts.
- To do a writing or speaking activity, you can tell the learners to express their feelings (speak to your partner or write about it) as if they were that character. At this point, a real life purpose needs to be added in order to clarify the context and create a real life conversation. You may say that the Duck Family Members are discussing the beautiful nature around them. Each character then will express their feelings and thoughts, thus using simple vocabulary and language function. Or, as a writing task this can be a letter from one of the siblings to one of their friends, telling them about their wonderful trip of the day.
- Pictures are extremely motivating. Visual clues inspire.
- Choose light-hearted pictures such as the ones below:

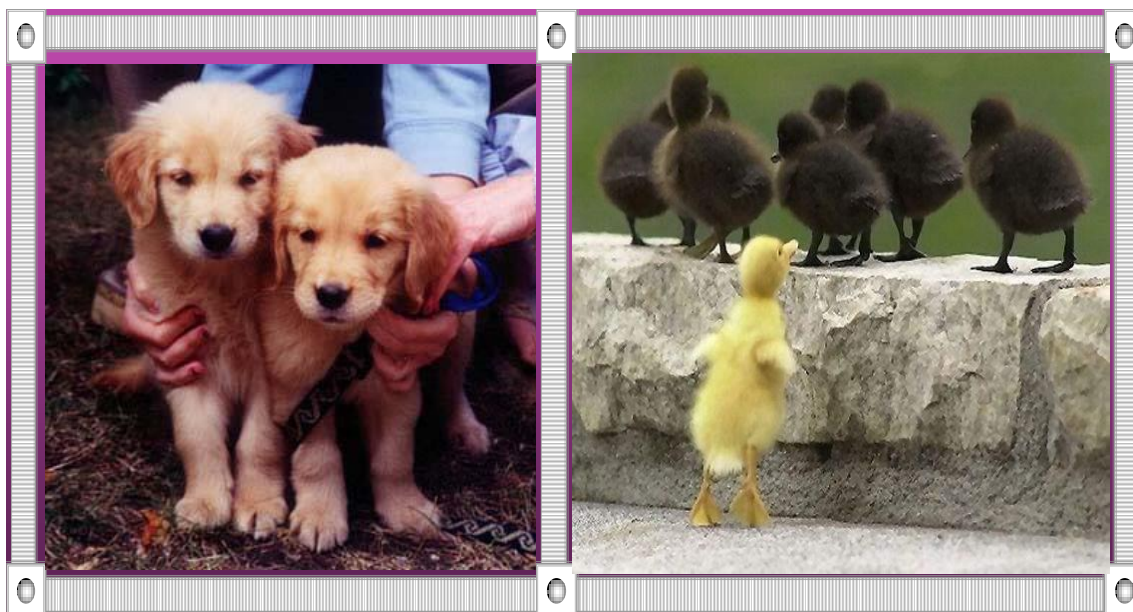


Figure 5. It's Hard to be a Puppy

Figure 6. Hey, Don't Leave me Alone

In both pictures, the teacher can start with simple mimes, and then move on to the mimed scene. She can further create a context for an improvisation or a role play based on these pictures. Again, if this is intended to be a writing activity, then learners can focus either on their feelings and thoughts for the present or past and write about them in a letter to a friend.

#### **6. Educational Implications and Concluding Remarks**

*"The distant in time has become the present in consciousness not through magic, but through drama"*

(Wagner, 1976, p. 19)

Drama can involve learners of any age "at many levels, through their bodies, minds, emotions, language and social interaction" (Phillips, 2000, p. 6). Creative drama and drama activities can provide a highly motivated class of EFL learners as they create meaningful opportunities for communication for both young and adult learners. Such opportunities are excellent means for learners to engage in social interaction with their teachers and peers. In using drama-smart pedagogy, whether the teacher is doing a pantomime or a role play activity, the learning atmosphere created in class as a result of engagement in drama work will enhance learning on many levels. The learners can develop their language proficiency in a most enjoyable way and they can get a chance to express their feelings and become aware of the feelings of their teacher and peers. They can also develop their creativity and critical thinking skills by walking in the shoes of different characters feeling different emotions.

This paper has argued for the use of drama in teaching in EFL classes at any level. It has attempted to show that it is possible to work with a simple theme using pantomime and creative movement starting with simple but low risk and enjoyable activities. It has also attempted to show that one simple activity can be redesigned as an improvisation or role

play activity which is an enjoyable but high risk activity, thus demonstrating that DSL and teaching can be done by working on a continuum of simple to complex, thus getting all our ducks in a row.

In order to clarify how to manage activities on such a continuum of learning, an original sample activity has been presented with aims and detailed classroom procedures. It is hoped that the reader has benefitted from such an exploration of drama activities which are very flexible in design and can be reshaped for the achievement of both personal and academic aims. Arguably, drama-smart learning may be considered as an effective pedagogical model for teachers who are responsible for the education of learners from kindergarten to pre-service education. Such lessons which have been carefully planned and designed can serve as a great educational means for enabling learning geared towards both non-linguistic and linguistic aims.

The present article contends that the use of drama work in EFL can be an invaluable tool not only in teaching but also in training. In teacher training or education, drama can be used “to develop self-knowledge and self awareness” of teachers and help to “understand the classroom environment better” (Griggs, 2001, p.24). Thus, the Drama-smart Learning Model can be beneficial at both in-service and pre-service contexts for the education of the learners and teachers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century by enhancing their confidence, independence, responsibility and creative and critical thinking

It is true that drama requires “dedication and loyalty” both on the part of the teachers and students (Wessels, 1993, p. 10). Nevertheless, as mentioned, it can create genuine communication and joy of learning, often not catered for in traditional classrooms or course books (ibid). Adopting a DSL approach may be a challenge as it runs contrary to traditional practices in pre-service and in-service teacher education which usually favor “a banking concept of education” and in which knowledge is considered as “a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable” (Freire, 1990, p.58). And yet, if we can engage ourselves and our learners in a DSL approach, it will have been a most fulfilling, motivating and invaluable educational endeavor.

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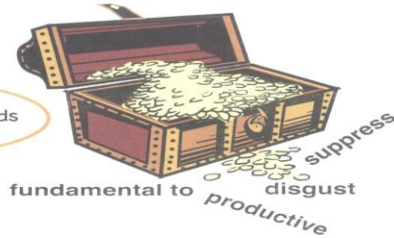
Appendix A: The Duck Family Activity in Spot On

A Living Scientist Unit 9

C. After You Read



Can you guess the meaning of these words from the text?



1. Look at the text and tick the correct definition of each word.

“productive” probably means...

creative

lazy

“fundamental to” probably means...

important for

not important for

“disgust” probably means...

dislike

like

“suppress” probably means...

hide your feelings

express your feelings

Go to Workbook page 44; activity 5.

2. Work in a group. Look at the picture of the duck family. Imagine that you are one of these characters. Can you identify your feelings? Express your feelings to a partner.

e.g.  
Are you happy with your family?

