

ROLE-PLAY TECHNIQUE AT THE ENGLISH LESSON

Hanna Karpenko

Candidate of Psychological Sciences, Associate Professor at the Department of

Foreign Languages

Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University

Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine

Acquiring communicative skills is the most important aim of most language learners. As student talking time in class is limited, every opportunity should be taken to provide learners with speaking practice.

Role-Play is an ideal way of providing useful fluency practice if students are not confused by instructions which are too complicated or deterred by roles which may seem unfamiliar. Being involved into role-playing, students are challenged both on an intellectual and linguistic levels.

Role-Play helps students communicate more freely and encompass an extremely varied collection of activities, and what is more it gives them a great chance to apply their skills in practice.

Many teachers would like to use role-play in class but feel unsure how to approach it. They think students will take it as childish or embarrassing and won't cooperate. Sometimes it is difficult to convince students that role-play is beneficial and entertaining. If you have established group spirit, the students may be more willing to try this activity, and role-play may turn into a great source of satisfaction for everyone. But it is necessary to say that role-play is always successful. Here are some advantages and disadvantages of using role-play in language classes.

Advantages:

- First of all, it is necessary to say that for role-play to be fully successful, each student should be active almost 100 % of the time. That's why one of the main advantages of role-play is maximum students' activity.

- Another advantage is the relevance of role-play. It gives a student a chance to use the language without direct control of a teacher.
- As no learning group is homogeneous, teacher should grade the tasks according to students' abilities. For example, one can use role-cards with instructions for "fast thinkers" and cards containing a skeleton of conversation with instruction for "slow thinkers". This is the third advantage of role-play. When designing role-cards, teacher should be careful not to give academically weak students too much help and encourage them in independent work.

Disadvantages:

If the main aim of the class is oral proficiency, then it is difficult from a pedagogical point of view, to find any disadvantages in using role-play as a teaching and learning technique. But there is no doubt that in certain classes, and certain teaching situations, there may be some practical drawbacks.

Teachers come up with a variety of superstitions to role-play:

- It'll create chaos in the classroom.
- It's just practice – my students won't actually learn anything.
- My students can't act; they are too shy etc.

Few teachers operate in ideal circumstances. It is useful to suggest that you should involve students into role-play in turns, and have some extra task prepared for the rest of the class.

If the time taken for preparation and follow-up work is included, role-play will take up a lot of classroom time. Here we should remember that role-play doesn't exist by itself. In this technique all language skills are involved: listening, speaking, reading. Extra writing practice could also be provided by getting students to write letters expressing different points of view to the local paper, or by setting a task to write a report concerning any certain discussion. The point is not so much whether we can afford to spend time on role-play, but whether we can afford not to.

Before embarking on role-play in the class, it is essential that all aspects of this technique have been carefully considered by teacher. Role-play cannot be successful if it hasn't been well prepared, and unless it has been chosen in accordance with the level of students' knowledge and their interests.

REFERENCES

1. Карамушка Л.М. Рольова гра / Л.М. Карамушка // Енциклопедія освіти / Акад. пед. наук України ; [головний ред. В.Г. Кремень]. – К. : Юрінком Інтер, 2008. – 1040 с.
2. Куліш І.М. Гра як фактор розвитку пізнавального інтересу особистості / Нові технології навчання. Наук.-метод. зб. – Вип. 29. – К., 2001.
3. Krysia M. Yardley-Matwiejczuk. Role Play: Theory and Practice. Sage, 1997.