

Unit 6 Content
PROCESS: Deep Understanding & Critical Thinking

Role Play

Applying what you already know about your students, including their interests and learning profiles (including their VAK and Multiple Intelligence preferences), you can select learning activities that not only help to fill in the gaps between students' prior knowledge and what they need to know in order to reach your learning objectives, but that also respond to students' individual learning styles. For example, if I know that a group of my students enjoy learning interpersonally, I can design a learning activity that will allow them to learn about the content while interacting with their peers. Role-play is one powerful way to contextualize your content, build background knowledge, and get students engaged in meaningful practice of listening and speaking academic language.

Role play can be implemented in various ways, one of which is through plays. A play is not just another form of literature for reading. It's a piece of literature that walks and talks before your eyes. Dramatizing activities help ELL students investigate a subject while finding its relationship to themselves and society, specifically the new society that they have just moved into. They also allow ELL students to apply social and life skills that may be new to them within the culture of their new school. Learning language concurrently with content through this type of approach allows students to process information actively which helps to make it more meaningful and memorable. Even if some students are not ready yet to produce verbally in front of the class or small group, they may be assigned a mute or behind-the-scenes role, where they may listen attentively while silently playing their part.

Through such interactive and dramatic activities, students also have the opportunity to learn more about each other and each other's cultures. This allows them to develop a deeper sense of understanding and empathy toward one another that rarely develops from passively reading a text. Role play promotes supportive learning environments that nurture students' sense of emotional safety, and therefore, foster learning. Check out this video clip of a 9th grade Developmental Language Arts class from a Broward County High School as they role play the story, "Father in Law." The students in this play range from A1 to B1 and they represent 8 nationalities.

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Click on the link below if you want to find out more about how you can integrate role-play to help ELLs process information.

<http://www.tesolcourse.com/tesol-course-articles/drama-teach/article-01-jb.php>

TESOL Articles: Using Drama to Teach English as a Foreign Language

This brief article will highlight what is meant by the term 'drama' before moving onto look at why drama is a '...very effective weapon' (Boal, 1979:ix) in the classroom. It will then add to this information a number of influential factors that will demonstrate why drama should be considered as key strategy in teaching English as a Foreign Language.

Role play is certainly not the only way to build background knowledge and contextualize information. There is not enough time in this course to discuss the myriad ways that you can design learning activities that build background knowledge. Refer to the **ESOL Strategies Matrix and its addendum for examples**. This resource provides you with more than 80 instructional strategies and activities that contextualize information and help students to process for deeper understanding. You will not spend much time discussing this matrix in this course since it is explored in another course, however, it is worth mentioning the fact that the strategies offered on this matrix are concrete ways that you can differentiate your instruction to make it accessible to ELLs during the input, processing, and output phases of learning.

Technology

Using multimedia can often contextualize information in a way that appeals more than one of the Multiple Intelligences. *Comiclfe*, *Inspiration*, *Kidspiration*, *Garage Band*, *imovie*, and *ActiveInspire*, are just a few examples of software programs that are free to use with the Broward County school district. These all contextualize information and help students to gain deeper understanding of the content in ways that appeal to their learning profiles. Which technology programs do you use to contextualize your content? How does it help your ELLs to process new information?

There are also many online resources available to you. It just seems that there is never the time to explore and find out what's out there and how they can help you to enhance our lessons at all stages of learning. Well, guess what, stop right here so that you can build in some of that exploration time. Woohoo!

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You will be provided with a list of resources to start off. But don't stop here! Explore away! The World Wide Web is vast in its scope and filled with more resources than you could ever hope to discover in a sitting. So click around. Explore some of the resources. Try out some activities. Most importantly, stay focused on where and how you might integrate some of these tools into your lessons. Ask yourself at each new stop: "How will this activity help to build background knowledge/foster deeper understanding of your content?" "How will it help students to reach your learning goals?"

For BCPS Teachers:

BEEP is an online portal rich with resources that build background knowledge and promote deep understanding. One such resource is A+ Rise that supports standards-based curriculum and English language development with instructional strategies that promote critical thinking and respond to students' learning profiles. Check it out!



Another great resource in Beep is **Discovery Learning** where you can locate short video clips that pertain to your content. By sharing short clips with your students, you help to contextualize your content through multimodal approaches. ELLs are able to build background knowledge that is contextualized with visual and auditory support.

Lights, Camera, Action!



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Tumble Books are full of short stories that are brought to life through visual and auditory supports. What a great way to build background and develop language skills!



Teaching Books is designed to build background knowledge. You can find out all about your authors and important information that will help ELLs fill in the gaps and soar toward your learning goals.



There are many more resources through Beep and other. If you don't have access to Beep, don't fret. The following link will direct you to lots of websites and online resources that help ELLs to build background knowledge. Even if you don't have access to Beep, you're going to want to try some of these on for size. And don't feel limited to the directions that you were sent in. Remember, this time is all about exploring the resources that are out there and will work for your specific purposes of meeting your learning goals.

So, check it out. Share what you have found with others. Remember, this course is also about collaboration and sharing best practices with your colleagues. Have fun!

everythingESL.net

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 **Differentiating Instruction for English Language Learners**
by Judie Haynes

Attention all elementary ESL and classroom teachers! Do you want to discover great web sites for the English language learners in your class? Here is a painless way to give students English language practice in the classroom or at home.

http://www.everythingsl.net/instruction/differentiating_instruction_lang_94938.php