

## Creating a second language performance (Oh yes you can!)

### Reasons for creating a performance in a second language classroom

- Memory is enhanced by emotional context. What your students learn as part of a performance, with all the camaraderie and nervousness involved, will stay with them long past the performance date.
- Children want to share their abilities with a receptive audience, in a context where they can be successful.
- Theatre appeals to all learning styles, the visual, the auditory, the kinesthetic. It allows those that are less visually inclined to shine. It engages the whole child.
- Creating a show together is fun and creates group solidarity.
- Theatre is not just a “poor cousin” to Hollywood style productions. Throughout history, theatre has been used as a unifying cultural force, to provide ritual and meaning to a society (or part of society).
- Language is more than words. It needs gesture, movement and emotion to come alive. Performance supports that.

### Rules for successfully creating a show (a collective creation)

- Start small and work in ways that you’re comfortable with
- By creating your own show, you can tailor it to your student’s strengths and your curriculum.
- Find a “big idea” that encompasses lots of smaller poems, songs, etc
- Pull ideas from what you already know or have worked with
- Know your students. Give them only as much freedom and/or responsibility as you’re sure they can handle.
- **Everybody learns everything**
- Roles are shared, meaning subgroups of students speak the roles chorally. In second language classes, this is important as they need the security of several voices to feel confident, and because they are more likely to project when in groups.
- Remember that it may be difficult for children in physical roles to speak and move at the same. Use a supporting choral group to provide the voices.
- **Everybody learns everything**
- Call forth the best in your students, nurture their highest selves.
- Keep costumes, props, etc to a minimum. Keep your attention focused on the language.
- Plan your show for later on in the year (April, May or June)
- If you are the language teacher for several grades, prepare vocabulary the year before. (Have other grades present as well)
- If you cannot illustrate or demonstrate a concept to your students, accept that you may have to explain in English.
- Ask for help from colleagues or parents; possibly even older students.
- **Everybody learns everything**
- **Think in terms of images, not just “talking heads”**

Begin each dramatically focused class by:

### **Waking up the body**

Non-verbal (or mostly non-verbal) games to build cohesion, engage the learner and get them out of academic mode.

Examples of games:

Hoola-hoop snake (increase # as required, hands must be held)

Sept

Vingt, many variables involved, both in number of in action

Jeu de ballon (increase # as required, receiver never changes, hands behind back 1<sup>st</sup> time)

### **Waking up the feelings (physical and/or verbal expression)**

Ooh la la!

All these games have exactly the same goal  
Of soliciting fluency of ideas, and require  
individual improvisation

Voyons donc

Tiens, c'est pour toi. Merci.

### **Bring French vocabulary to life**

This is not improvisation, or not mostly improvisation. This is where you are working on set dialogue (two people), poetry (choral) or having children work in groups to come up with ideas/actions/setting for a specific theme/character/text.

Model dialogue (Ballons à vendre)

Learn poetry/song with gesture (Entrez Mesdames)

Teacher must be very clear on goals of group work before sending the children off AND each group MUST show that same day.

## **The natural world**

Changes of the seasons. (5-7 minutes long)

Groups of children perform

- Trees
- Leaves, flowers, snow
- Sun, moon, stars

Supporting songs, poems, etc:

Les feuilles tombent

La neige tombent

Le printemps

Nous sommes les arbres

Le soleil passe, la lune passe

## **Le marché/ the marketplace**

Groups of children perform

- Merchants
- Customers
- Children playing

Supporting songs, poems, etc

Ma mere m'envoie-t'au marché

La cerise

Le vendeur du ballon

Le laitier

Les legumes et fruits

## **Le ferme/ the farm**

Groups of children perform

- The farmer, farm wife, children (family related vocabulary)
- Animals
- Tasks of planting, harvesting, marketing, baking

Supporting songs, poems, etc

Le fermier dans le pré

Savez-vous planter les choux?

Pomme de reinette

Sur le ferme à Mathurin