

# Listening and responding drama activities

The drama and performance activities here help children appreciate and internalise the sound patterns, intonation, cadence and phonics of the target language. The children are involved in observing and reinterpreting sound and sound patterns of words, sentences and short texts.

## 1. Single word or phrase mimes

*Level: beginners*

- ◆ Use single word or phrase mimes for target language learning beginners. Ask pupils to mime the words or phrases a teacher or partner says.

## 2. Short text message mimes

*Level: moving on*

- ◆ Listen to a text – a song, a poem or questions and answers in a dialogue – and ask the children to convey the meaning of the text in a mime. (The sequence of mimes conveys the message of the text in this case).

### **3. A group mime**

*Level: advanced learners*

- ◆ Each child is responsible for a part of a longer listening text.
- ◆ The teacher plays the class a longer message, eg a song with four or five verses or a conversation made up of six questions and answers.
- ◆ The children are put into groups depending on how the teacher divides up the text. Each child in the group is given a number.
- ◆ The teacher calls out a number and the children with that number go to the teacher and listen again to their part of the text. Each child must put together a mime of what they have heard the teacher say and convey the message to their group.
- ◆ The children perform their mimes to their groups in random order and then the group must reconstruct their mime message as a series of mime performances in what they think is the correct order.
- ◆ The whole class listens to the whole text again. Do the groups want to change the order of their mimes?

## **4. Rhythm identikits**

*Level: beginners, moving on and advanced learners*

- ◆ It can be used with single words, short utterances or longer texts. It can help the children to internalise and remember the language you are practising and focus on the intonation and tone of the language.
- ◆ Can the class help you to identify the rhythm in a short utterance, a sentence or a series of questions and answers? Can the class clap out the rhythm with you?
- ◆ Now try calling out a phrase and ask the children to respond just with the rhythm.
- ◆ Beat out a rhythm – can the class say the phrase in words?

## **5. Rhythm reports**

*Level: beginners, moving on and advanced learners*

- ◆ Can the children help you to make a rhythm report of a text? This means that they listen with you to a text and create the rhythm by tapping / clapping or beating out the message without saying any words.
- ◆ They must then perform the rhythm alongside the spoken text said by you or played on a sound file.

## **6. A class rhythm performance**

*Level: beginners, moving on and advanced learners*

- ◆ Use percussion instruments to make text into a performance. You need to create 'rhythm reports' using the activity above first.
- ◆ Once you have a 'rhythm report' then divide the class into two parts - with half the class creating the rhythm and the other half of the class performing this as one communal voice.

## **7. Passing on the beat**

*Level: beginners and moving on*

- ◆ This activity is good to use with beginners or children that are moving on.

Beginners: Working in a pair, the children challenge each other to pass on the beat. One partner listens to a short message from the other partner in the target language and performs it as a 'beat without words message'. Does it sound like the message with words? Does it pass on the beat? They then swap roles.

Moving on: Play a couple of games in pairs of the simple pass on the beat game above. Now ask the children to listen to a series of sentences in the target language and in pairs to create the beat of the sentences. Can one pair challenge a second pair to spot their 'pass on the beat' sentence from the series of spoken sentence length utterances?

## **8. Sound signals**

*Level: beginners*

- ◆ The class must decide upon actions which convey types of sounds we might hear in key target language words.

Is it an explosive sound?

Is it a sharp sound?

Is it a long slow sound?

Is it a forced sound?

- ◆ Now share words with the children: adjectives, nouns or verbs. Can the children listen to the sounds in the words and convey the strongest sound in the word as sound signal?
- ◆ Can one child challenge another to identify the word that they have conveyed as a sound signal?

## **9. Sound and meaning interpreters**

*Level: moving on and advanced learners*

- ◆ This is a physical activity so children need some space for this to work well – hall or playground maybe.
- ◆ The children listen to a text – song, rhyme, poem, story and then they have to convey this through movement and interpretation of sound.
- ◆ They should work with a partner; one partner conveys the meaning of the text through mime and the second partner conveys the sound of the words and phrases.
- ◆ A warm up to this activity would be to practise the ‘sound signals’ activities above. Can the children in pairs make this into a sound and meaning interpretation of the text to perform for another pair or for the class?

## **10. Visualisation**

*Level: moving on and advanced learners*

- ◆ This activity is similar to ‘sound and meaning interpreters’.

Ask the children to find a safe space in the hall and ask them to listen to a familiar song, poem or story in the target language. Ask them to take part in what they hear and to convey the story through movement. If you are certain that all children will be safe, ask them to close their eyes and perform the story as they hear it. Ask for volunteers to share their own performance and visualisation with the class. Ask the children to share with you afterwards how the performances differ that they have watched?

## **11. Radio waves**

*Level: beginners (with short utterances) moving on (sentence level) and advanced learners (series of sentences in a short text)*

- ◆ This is a listening and responding activity based upon frequency pictures that we see on a computer screen when we record our voices.
- ◆ Let the children watch the frequency picture of a spoken sentence or text in the target language. Ask the children to think about why the waves change shape and what this tells us about the sound that is being amplified. How might we convey physical performance radio waves? Ask the children to stand up and watch the screen and play some sound files with frequency waves that are visible.
- ◆ Play the sentence or text again. Can the children create physical movements with all of their bodies which correspond to the frequency picture they can see?
- ◆ Share several listening texts with frequency pictures with the children. Ask them to explore the radio wave picture they would make for each of the texts.
- ◆ Play a game where the class need to guess the target language that a child is conveying through his/her radio wave performance.

