

Eltas Event Review by Angeline Fischer

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DRAMA METHODOLOGY FOR THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM WITH PETER DYER
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cated movements were introduced: clapping knees, clapping hands, right finger snap and left finger snap while simultaneously telling a story. In this exercise, one learner begins the story then passes it on to another learner who continues to tell the story following the same rhythm. After this, the language of interrupting was practiced in pairs. One person took on the role of optimist and the other pessimist. The optimist says a sentence starting with “Fortunately...” and the pessimist continues using “Unfortunately...” in the next sentence, and so on to complete a story. Lots of funny stories resulted from the activity, and other variations involved using sequences such as “yes, however” and “yes, moreover”.

Miming and acting activities

Another fun exercise involved miming giving and receiving a gift. The ‘gift giver’ would mime only the size of the gift and ‘bring’ it to another participant. The ‘receiver’ would then pretend to open the gift, imagine and react to what it could be, thank the giver and eventually disclose what the object was.

Peter Dyer’s dynamic teaching style kept ELTAS members entertained throughout this interactive workshop. During the event, teachers took on the role of students as Peter led participants through various tasks. Here are some of the best activities from the day:

Warm-ups

Beginning with a series of warm-up exercises, participants were asked to stand in a circle. Teachers were told to ‘send’ and ‘receive’ claps to their neighbours forcing participants to stay alert, respond and

initiate interaction. The next warm-up involved throwing and catching balls across the circle sequentially. After establishing an initial pattern, multiple balls were received and thrown in the same order. At each throw, balls were called out as ‘ball 1’, ‘ball 2’ and ‘ball 3’ for each respective ball. This proved to be a fun and challenging exercise, building greater engagement within the group.

Active listening & participation activities

After a quick break, more compli-



Another performing game called ‘the forgetful storyteller’ involved Peter beginning a story and then feigning forgetting. A student would then chime in with their ideas to further the story along. Peter would then re-join and continue the story, forgetting time and time again, with different learners adding twists to the story, creating something new. Another popular activity was having pairs walk together side by side to create stories. For each step taken, participants created a story, taking turns to add additional words. This slowed the pace down considerably, helping to reign in those who tend to dominate exercises and encourage those more reluctant to participate. One final activity was using pictures to stimulate drama work. One learner first mimics a position from a picture and then ‘freezes’. Another participant joins by entering the scene and begins a dialog. After several

sentences they freeze and a new participant enters the scene.

Peter Dyer’s workshop was a hands-on session with interactive learning. Using these techniques proved to be an entertaining way to increase student engagement and liven up the classroom. ■



ANGELINE FISCHER is a Canadian teaching Business English in the Stuttgart area. After completing Economics and MBA degrees, she specialized in the fields of controlling and accounting working at several multinationals. Currently, when not teaching executives English language skills, she lectures at a local university on business, management and leadership skills, as well as intercultural competence. She is also the host of “English Breakfast” an intercultural morning show at radiofips.