

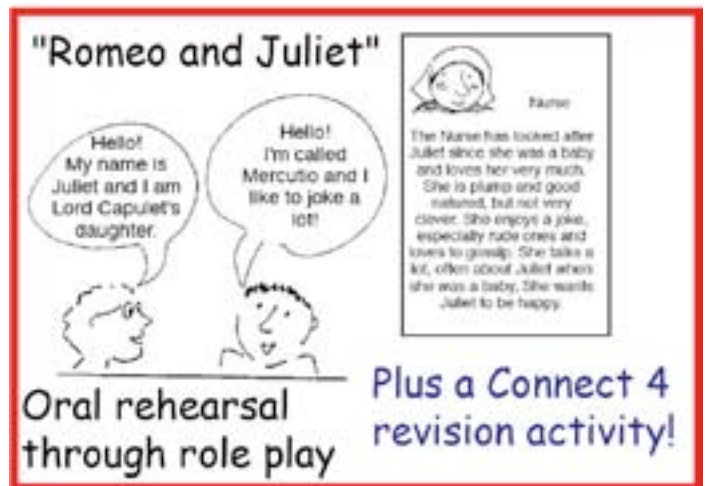
Transformations

Role play, hot seating and introduce me activities.

We have been creating and disseminating role play and hot seating activities ever since the project first explored ways of scaffolding talk in the 1970s in London. We developed them for early years using story props and adapted them to secondary settings. Romeo and Juliet was one of our early efforts:

www.collaborativelearning.org/romeoandjuliet.pdf

In the same way as our guesswork about the effectiveness of talk in building the brain has now been confirmed by neurological research, we are discovering that our role play activities play an very important role in building talk confidence and developing the language of thinking.



Ideally this is the best way for role play activities to have the biggest impact. Individual pupils or pairs of pupils are given a small card with some information about a person or thing. There may be an accompanying picture or diagram. They are asked to read the information and memorise enough to present some of it to another person or group. They are asked only to consult the card if they get completely stuck. They are encouraged to present the information in their own words in their own way. They may dramatise the information. They may add extra information which they happen to know. They can provide their own comments on the information. Their listeners then reciprocate by presenting their own information. They are then directed to find two more sources of information. They then have to present each others information to the new group and the new group does the same for them.

So, for the first step, reading takes place followed by discussion on how to present. The information is then presented 'in role' orally. e.g. "I am Mercutio. I like to joke a lot...." Then the pupils who have found out about Mercutio have to introduce him to others. e.g. "This is Mercutio. He is a bit of a joker..." As the information moves from person to person, from reading to oral explanation, from personal presentation to recount it undergoes transformations. There is repetition, but the talk moves up and down the mode continuum from reading formal written text to anecdotal comment. The constant changes make it easier for pupils learning English while they are learning to increase their understanding and listen to a wide range of language structures. Role play demonstrates the way in which collaborative approaches balance curriculum knowledge, social relations and the development of language and thinking.

This short guide can be found on www.collaborativelearning.org/transformations.pdf