

Transformations Resource summaries from Collaborative Learning.

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. We developed them for early years using story props and adapted them to secondary settings. Romeo and Juliet was one of our early efforts:

Webpage:
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 a very important role in strengthening talk confidence and developing the language of thinking with relevant curriculum vocabulary.

"Romeo and Juliet"

Hello! My name is Juliet and I am Lord Capulet's daughter.

Hello! I'm called Mercutio and I like to joke a lot!

Name

The Nurse has looked after Juliet since she was a baby and loves her very much. She is plump and good natured, but not very clever. She enjoys a joke, especially rude ones and loves to gossip. She talks a lot, often about Juliet when she was a baby. She wants Juliet to be happy.

Oral rehearsal through role play

Plus a Connect 4 revision activity!

King John's Court and Government 1215
Role play cards

King John had so many silver pennies they became scarce!

King John travelled sixty nine thousand miles!

Silver Penny

I am a silver penny, English pennies are popular because they have a lot of silver in them. I think King John loves as best of all. He has made and hoards of us in coffers all over the country. He carries packs of us on carts as he travels. We are the only sort of currency. Twelve of us are called a shilling, 200 of us are called a mark and 240 of us are called a pound.

"It is a hundred-handed giant, who if he be all maimed, is yet all the same, and still hundred-handed; a hydra of many heads."
Walter Map's description of the king's court

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 at www.collaborativelearning.org/transformations.pdf