

**Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership "Arte di leggere"**

**2015-2018**

**TOOLKIT**

**"Drama in literacy teaching"**

**the implementation of drama-literacy courses**



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## Introduction

This TOOLKIT for the implementation of drama-literacy courses is intended not only for educators and teachers but also for trainers, animators and social workers involved in adult education, especially in more underprivileged contexts; it is particularly useful as an educational tool for stimulating the active participation of learners in the acquisition of actual skills – not just knowledge and learning – and thus represents a support and precious supplementary tool for learning professionals in their didactic and pedagogical activities, its added value deriving from its being part of a creative growth and learning process, both integrated and transversal.

One of the most significant features of the Toolkit is its great transferability, or rather, the ample use that can be made of it outside the Partnership, in all the contexts listed above. The activity models proposed, in fact, can be adapted easily to meet the needs of each different target group, and the Toolkit contains tips for educators on how to modify the activities and add new ones – given that it is the educators, first and foremost, who have a thorough knowledge of their own group and its needs!

The contents of the Toolkit have been developed on the basis of training experiences and experimental teaching results.

The Toolkit is divided up into the following sections:

- foreword on literacy teaching and theatre pedagogy;
- brief description of key concepts (theatre and games, theatre and neuroscience, imagination, inspiration);
- how to set up a drama-literacy workshop - practical aspects (atmosphere, government, energy and assistance);
- description of a working example and its components;
- drama-literacy game models, described in three increasingly complex steps, for easier application.

The exercises are designed for use either consecutively or in sets, depending on the situation. The objectives of each exercise are described, together with the preparation, execution and assessment activities.

To ensure maximum dissemination at European level, the Toolkit is available in the Partnership languages (Italian, French, German, Spanish) and English.

It can be downloaded free of charge from the websites of the partner organisations.

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## Product Genesis

This product is the result of experimental work done by the project partners – Teatro del Norte, Alarm Theater and Teatro Nucleo – in theatre workshops in the prisons of Oviedo (Spain), Brakwede–Bielefeld (Germany) and Ferrara (Italy).

Thanks to this project, the partners were able to organise learning experiences in the various workshops, attend the lessons and, in some cases, witness the results in the form of public performances. They were able to compare notes with prison personnel, educators and collaborators in order to assess both how the methods were working and what the relationship between formal and non-formal education was. Subsequently, they were able to introduce the things they had learnt into their own drama workshops and carry out the methodological experiment. Personnel from the partner Alpha Centauri participated in and supervised the whole process – as regards data collection and synthesis – and researchers from the Belgian partner, CRIS-University of Liège, had the specific task of drawing up the Guidelines.

We will now propose a series of exercises which, we believe, can be of help to educators involved in literacy teaching processes in environments which, from the human dynamics point of view, are markedly critical, such as prisons. Educators will be able to choose the exercises they want and combine them in their own ways, according to their own preferences and the physical and social conditions they are working in.

One important aspect that came to the fore in the experimental work, and was subsequently theorised in the Guidelines, is the breadth, depth and importance attributed to the concept of “literacy”. What became apparent was that literacy wasn't just a question of “learning a language”, but rather of acquiring the social skills needed to use it, including body language and many other aspects of non-verbal communication.

A significant amount of workshop time was dedicated to constructing and caring for the work group. From a sociological point of view, in fact, a theatre group is not a “class”, but rather a group governed by sets of dynamics and relationships that must be heeded if the group is to express its full potential. The group is the environment in which you “learn to be literate”, where everybody participates, where it really is “all for one and one for all” and where hierarchies are functions rather than roles. For example, everyone can, and often must, function as an “educator”, because it is only by educating others that you can understand your own education.

The exercises described here reflect this experience. Their provenance is owed to the great variety of partner’s experiences, and they belong by now to a sort of common background that had been growing in the last centuries and transmitted directly from masters to pupils, like it’s normal in non-formal pedagogical contexts. The aim of the exercises in the first part is to enhance the creation and fostering of the group, and they can be (re-) proposed at any time in the course of workshops should the need arise to re-establish the appropriate dynamics.

Foreword.

## WHY DRAMA IN LITERACY TEACHING?

Drama in literacy teaching creates a situation in which learners and teachers become co-players in a game, involving each other reciprocally through a willingness to empathise, communicate, experiment, inter-react and discover. The game is a set of rules by which the players agree to coexist. The rules, rather than being a restriction to the participant, are the things that allow the game to take place. The game is not a diversion, but an integrating activity that enhances awareness of the problems and basic notions of intellectual growth. It can be used not only to improve oral and written expressive skills, but also non-verbal ones. It is a source of energy, helping learners to develop their powers of concentration, resolve problems and interact within a group.

The skills and strategies needed to do the exercises are developed in dramatic play. Inventiveness and creativity make it possible to overcome whatever difficulties the exercise presents, because what is made clear to the players is that they can achieve their objectives however they want – doing handstands, flying – and still be keeping to the rules of the game. No matter how the player decides to solve the problems of the game, the way he or she chooses is very likely to gain the consensus of the other players and the educators.

Many of the skills acquired through play are social. Most games have a strong social component. They set a problem that has to be solved and each individual has to interact with the group to get results. The theatre workshop is organised in such a way as to give everybody the possibility of equal rights to freedom, respect and responsibility within the community formed by the class.

Play is democratic: anybody can join in. Anybody can learn by playing. Play provokes, stimulates vitality, reawakens wholeness – body and mind, intelligence and creativity, spontaneity, intuition and feeling – when everybody, learners and teachers alike, keeps their mind on what is essential to theatre: the here and now, the present moment.

The player must have the freedom to take part in the game fully and feel free enough to interact and experiment with the physical and social environment. This condition, which may seem obvious, becomes critical when the literacy teaching takes place in certain contexts, such as prison – people living their daily life in a restrictive situation, where the range of possible choices is extremely limited and where “out of order” behaviour is heavily penalised. All of a sudden, paradoxically, inmates are asked to behave “freely”; to move, to use their vocal chords in ways that are neither habitual nor permitted. It is only when the body and voice are able to move freely that the mind puts itself in a state better suited to coping with the difficulties of the learning process and more likely to appreciate the results. Also, this particular situation, or rather all these possibilities for expressing oneself, can be an additional reason for joining the literacy classes.

Another assumption that determines a condition of reciprocity is that the situation created is not in an exclusively formal classroom one, where a group of completely ignorant persons – the learners – have to acquire a certain kind of knowledge from another person, the instructor. The reciprocity of dramatic play, typical of non-formal teaching, encourages learners to seek knowledge and underlying skills they didn't know existed, and which emerge precisely because the game demands them, is borne by them. Being illiterate doesn't mean you know nothing at all; you can talk, you can use words, you can communicate beyond words, and all this assumes a level of learning that can be used to acquire the new knowledge brought by literacy. And when this knowledge emerges and is appropriately noted by the educators, it boosts learners' self-esteem and equips them to cope better with the strain of learning.

### **Inspiration and transformation in theatrical games.**

Inspiration derives from total involvement – physical, intellectual and intuitive – in an environment. Intuition, despite being a fundamental factor in the learning process, is often neglected. It is thought of as a natural talent possessed only by some. But we all have moments when the right answer just comes to us, when we do the right thing without having to think about it. Often these moments are exceptional ones, of crisis or danger, and much has been written about this. The workshop situation, which generates moments of freedom and spontaneity, is a preparatory step towards inspiration, which is born from intuition. Learners concentrating intensely on a game are capable of transforming or creating objects. They can create a world out of nothing, a world difficult to describe in words that seems to originate from the intensification of the physical movement and energy amongst the learners.

The basic concept is that channelling and stimulating intense concentration on a certain activity frees the attention required for inspiration to manifest itself spontaneously, guided by intuition. Neuroscientists tell us that this phenomenon is explained by the fact that the activity causes the *phased* functioning of the right and left hemispheres of the brain. This makes learners more “permeable” to the penetration of the technical knowledge – related to grammar and syntax rules – essential to the learning of a language. Things learnt in what we could call this highly “personal” manner remain impressed on the memory and become knowledge, in a way much more effective than revising and memorising. Revising and memorising, in fact, involve the activity of the left hemisphere alone, leaving the right one, which controls subjectivity, intuition and creativity, to get “bored”. This, in some learners, tends to generate distraction and negative, disruptive attitudes. This means the teacher has to put effort into the dual function of guardian of discipline and provider of knowledge. Paradoxically, those who “get bored”, if stimulated in the right way, can often be the most creative and inspired of all, capable of drawing the others into the game and getting good results and satisfaction for all.

What this line of reasoning points to is how important and necessary it is for educators to adjust their teaching techniques, their didactics, in such a way as to be able to benefit from this natural condition, common to every human culture and every context.

So, the formal teacher and drama instructor must find their participatory dynamic, a dynamic that is both propaedeutic and compatible with the specific situation they are working in. Usually, the teacher will attend the exercises and games led by the instructor and take notes about certain aspects that regard his or her specific field: use of language, syntax and grammar problems and pronunciation. The teacher will then intervene, either after the exercises or in a later class, clarifying the problems and giving the necessary explanations. The teacher can also suggest how the instructor can orient or develop certain exercises or games to bring them into line with didactic requirements.

## **THE DRAMA-LITERACY WORKSHOP**

The workshop has a drama instructor and a literacy teacher working side-by-side. The drama instructor has the task of introducing the standard teaching topics proposed by the teacher into the games. Together, they must develop an alchemy all of their own for teaching the basic elements of language – grammar, syntax, etc. – in a creative, dynamic atmosphere.

Each session has a beginning, a middle and an end. To start with, various warm-up games or exercises are proposed get the learners ready and create the necessary atmosphere. Then come the games, some of which are outlined below. Finally, a good closing routine needs to be created to end the session in a relaxed way and sort out any critical points that may have arisen.

### **The atmosphere in the workshop**

The workshop should engender a sense of well-being in all the participants. Granting learners the right to experiment in their approach to a problem, though, is a big responsibility for the educator. At first, this teaching method seems harder, because of the need to wait for learners to find things out for themselves, without interpreting or drawing conclusions on their behalf. But it is only when the players fully realise that they aren't going to be asked any questions they can't answer or set any problems they can't solve – and that their intrinsic skills are likely to be recognised and appreciated – that they can let themselves go and start experimenting and learning.

### **Control**

No educator wants to lose control of their class, and the inherent freedom of drama improvisation games can give rise to worries about indiscipline. In practice, though, learners are held in check by the need to dedicate their attention to the basic concept of each game and by the peer pressure of being in a team game. The learners will be orderly not because of coercion, already abundantly present in prisons and contexts alike, but because they themselves have chosen order. Creative freedom doesn't mean sacrificing discipline. True creativity means free individuals, no matter who they are and how they express themselves artistically, respecting a rigorous discipline. Discipline imposed from above often produces only frustrated or rebellious attitudes and can turn out to be totally negative or ineffective. But if, rather than being a kind of tug-of-war over the assertion of authority, discipline is chosen freely for the sake of an exercise, it results in responsible action – creative action. To achieve self discipline, imagination, devotion and enthusiasm are needed.

### **Energy**

The high energy levels referred to in the Toolkit may give rise to worries about potential disorder. But high energy levels are actually needed to keep the

group united and compact, keep apathy and boredom at bay, generate interest and focus attention on the events or projects being worked on.

Too much indiscipline or restlessness in a workshop session, however, is not a good sign. If this occurs, take a break and change the focus of attention. Stop whatever you're doing immediately and switch to something calmer that involves the whole group. Make use of anything – such as an activity that settles everybody down again – rather than reverting to admonitory or disciplinary action. This will make the whole thing more fun and consequently more productive and effective. Let the drama games be in control, rather than you yourself.

Freedom in a drama-game workshop doesn't mean taking liberties. Theatre is a rigidly disciplined art form. Expect neither too much nor too little from participants. The self-discipline of the group members will develop as soon as they get fully involved in the activities.

**Most sessions begin and end with typical warm-up games and closing routines.**

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**Plan for the day.**

To start with, draw up a plan for the session that includes five to ten games. This is probably twice the number you will actually use, but it's always better to be prepared, also because it allows you to choose the games best suited to the developing situation. The degree of interest, energy and enthusiasm (or lack of them) might make it necessary switch games at any time. Put a ring round the games that have been played. Mark the order they were played in. You might want to go back to the unused games in a future session, although starting with a new warm-up game is advisable. If a list of exercises for a particular session doesn't meet your requirements, move on to another one.

**All introductory games should be simple, fun and relaxing. Remember that you'll be playing it too.**

## **EXAMPLE OF WORKSHOP**

For the benefit of educators not very familiar with drama games, we will now describe a typical workshop situation.

Note that what follows must be seen simply as an example. Educators are encouraged to experiment and try out their own combinations, drawing inspiration from the situations created.

### **Game area**

Any space that can be created in the class can be the game area. It should be big enough to accommodate both the specific game chosen and an audience of learners. Naturally, the game area can change according to the needs of the game. Some games can be played with the learners sitting at their desks.

### **Teams**

Most drama games require a certain number of learners in each team. To encourage a sense of group belonging in the class, the teams should be picked at random. This will help to avoid the disappointment, discouragement and feeling of solitude that almost always comes to learners expecting to be picked by the educator or team captain.

### **Picking the teams**

If a game requires teams of five and the number of participants is thirty, there will obviously be six teams. Even before explaining the game, get the learners to divide up into groups of six, for as many teams as required by the game. To divide up into the groups of six, each participant in turn (following the order of the row or desks) will say a number from one to six, in sequence. The sequence will be repeated until everybody has said a number. The learners who said "1" will be in the first team, "2" in the second and so on. If there are 31 learners, one of the teams will have an extra player.

If individual progress in a group is uneven, it may be necessary to make the teams more balanced. This can be done by reshuffling – without making it too evident – the groups after the initial division in such a way as to ensure that all the learners get the chance to take the initiative in the course of the workshops. Arrange the groups so that the naturally exuberant characters are put in a position to encourage the development of the action. Take care, though, that these characters don't take over. Over time, every single player will develop the attitude required for taking leading positions.

**Freedom of choice is always respected  
in the workshop, even about whether or not  
to play.**

## **Fear of participating**

The reason why learners exercise their right whether or not to play might be because of a fear of participating. A fear of disapproval, or uncertainties about how to gain approval, could be the things that are holding a player back. The random division into teams almost always throws learners into the fray before they can offer any resistance. A learner who doesn't want to play, however, should stay and watch the game so as to break down their fear and encourage eventual participation. If a player drops out of a game during an action try using an assistance phrase such as *Help that teammate of yours who isn't playing!* In any event, never refer to any player by name. Uncertainty about who isn't playing keeps the group on its toes.

**As soon as learners start acquiring skills in the games and the kind of approach needed for playing, they will accept the differences that exist between them.**

## **Group understanding**

Group understanding means neither conforming to the “tyranny of the majority” nor blindly following a leader. Within the group understanding, learners will have complete freedom of choice, which means allowing for alternatives. Nobody will be ridiculed for suggesting things. Nobody will impose themselves on the decision-making. A feeling of mutual respect is generated between learners. Each person has the right to participate according to their abilities. Each person has their own responsibilities as part of a whole and will decide freely how to shoulder them. All the individuals will work together, committing themselves fully to the complete accomplishment of the event.

**Fairness will be achieved, together with discipline, when learners appreciate the value of group understanding and free themselves of the need to be “the best”.**

**To sum up: the best arrangement for “teaching literacy with drama” is that of a formal teacher working in parallel with a drama instructor, in the games that we shall now go on to describe.**

## **GAMES**

### **Basic concept**

The “basic concept” is the main problem in each game, which has to be solved by the learners. The instructor explains it to the learners as if it were part of the game itself, and refers to it in the course of the game in the suggestions and prompts made to guide them towards the objective. It is the idea that brings the game to life, encouraging a feeling of comradeship amongst the players as they all grapple with this same problem. The importance of diversity – both ethnic and cultural – is also emphasised, and how approaching the problem from different viewpoints will enhance the whole process and lead to a quicker solution. The *basic concept* is not the objective of the game; its purpose is to trigger concentration, which generates both the energy needed to complete the game and the attention required to inspire and guide the playing process. The effort involved in following an idea and uncertainty about the outcome both act as a brake on prejudices, fostering reciprocal support and producing organic involvement in the game.

### **Assistance**

Often, during the game, there are moments of stagnation, disorientation and “negative chaos”, with inevitable drops in the level of attention, or moments of conflict for all kinds of minor reasons. At these and other times it can be useful to get a possible “audience” – members of the group not participating actively in the exercise – involved, either physically or verbally. This “assistance” consists of repeating, out loud, the expression the drama instructor uses to keep the learners focused on the basic concept. It allows the instructor to intervene directly in the game. A number of *assistance* models are proposed in the games described below.

### **Assessment**

This is neither a judgement nor a criticism, but is derived from the basic concept of the game, and is often a reassertion of this concept. Some examples are given in italics, next to the word *assistance*. Their purpose is to prompt the direct participation of the audience (i.e. the participants not involved directly in the game) and heighten learners' awareness. Conjecture or interpretations must be avoided at all costs: the assessment must regard only things that are actually seen.

## Transformation games

### MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE

The purpose of games that use imaginary objects is to develop the learners' capacity for orientation, by giving hidden feelings and thoughts the chance to come to light. The objects used in these games are parts of space, the thing that surrounds us.

**Imaginary objects should be seen as manifestations of our innermost being, the part of us hidden from the visible world. Learners creating imaginary objects will discover that surpassing limits in their outward behaviour is equivalent to overcoming them within themselves.**

An imaginary ball is not a non-existent ball. It is part of space, air that gets to be called "ball". When you throw an imaginary ball you become conscious of the real ball that is missing at that moment in time: you act with the idea of a ball. An imaginary ball is an imaginary object perceived as real. In practice, this distinction is not abstract. Any audience can see the difference.

**The use of intuition cannot be taught. You have to let yourself be surprised**

The use of imaginary objects in a theatrical space is often thought of as pantomime, but in actual fact they are used in a different way to real pantomime – a venerable art form closely related to dance and conjuring. When the players create an imaginary object they are not trying to bring an artistically created illusion to life, for public use. Rather, they are experiencing the re-awakening of an intuitive area of the brain that is able to perceive the imaginary object as it appears. They are making the invisible visible; that is the magic of theatre!

**The way learners actually communicate amongst themselves is often invisible.**

In practice, an invisible ball thrown to another player in the BALL GAME helps the player to share and to form a relationship with the player who accepts and catches the invisible ball. To help them establish this relationship, suggest *Keep the ball in space and not in your imagination!* Then *Give the ball time to cross the space!* After a short time, everybody in the room will be able to perceive the spatial material intuitively, as if it were real, without actually seeing it! The space – the invisible – becomes visible with the cooperation of the learners as they throw and catch the imaginary object.

## Glossary of Concepts, Terms and Expressions

**Creative leap:** when a player's spontaneity comes to the fore to cope with a crisis; letting yourself go, seeing things from a different perspective, surpassing past limits.

**Imagination:** part of the intellect. When we ask somebody to imagine something we're asking them to access a personal reference structure, which has limits. When we ask somebody to see, we put them in an objective state that enables them to come into contact with the surrounding environment and acquire a new awareness.

**Play carefully:** a defence strategy; a way to get learners to be wary about unexpected discoveries. Playing carefully stops learners from committing themselves fully and using up new energy.

**Metamorphosis:** new creations and visible events emerging from intense physical movement and from the dynamic energy exchange between learners.

**Explore intensely!:** be on your guard for little nuances and details that shouldn't go unobserved. An *Explore intensely!* order is used to heighten the energy level, broaden and intensify the experience and discourage preplanned actions.

**Not in the mind! In space!:** if these expressions are used during an exercise they define an actual area – a space – where the energy exchange between learners and the playing actions has to take place. *Not in the mind! In space!* is advised not only for assessment but also for assistance. Even the youngest of learners will react subjectively and perceive this new piece of invisible material – space – clearly, as if it was real! *Not in the mind/In space!* is used to eliminate or prevent conditioned reactions. The perceptive capacity of the whole body is strengthened and the energy exchange intensifies.

**Ride your body! :** useful for creating a powerful detachment from the self during the game.

## Definitions of basic concepts used when explaining the games

**OBJECTIVES:** the main result you hope to achieve with each game; all the games are useful on different levels, however.

**BASIC CONCEPT:** participants keep their mind on the *BASIC CONCEPT* just as footballers keep their eye on a moving ball. Guarantees the involvement of all at any time in the game.

**EXPLANATION:** suggests to the instructor how to organise the game, where to position the learners, when to start the assistance, when to stop, etc.

**NOTES:** comments about what makes the game more effective, the difficulties that can arise and how to deal with them, the opportunities to look out for, relations with other players, etc.

**ASSISTANCE:** when in bold, this is the link between instructor and learners. Advice and support offered *while the game is taking place*.

**ASSESSMENT:** when in italics, these are questions aimed at both learners and observers. Brings out what has been perceived, learnt and/or achieved in the course of the game.

Not all learners will be able to play effectively at first. Accept this situation without making it a talking point. If somebody in the audience insists on the fact that some of the learners didn't manage to solve the problem, simply point out that not everything can be solved first time round. The important thing is: were the learners working on solving the problem?

**Audience, have you started recognising the thing that was in space or the player's imagination yet?  
Learners, do you agree with this?**

## **PART ONE**

### **Exercises for Warming Up and Creating an Atmosphere**

#### EXERCISE n° 1 TUG OF WAR

OBJECTIVE: to reawaken implicit communication between learners

BASIC CONCEPT: holding the rope, made of "spatial substance", as if it were a link uniting the two learners

EXPLANATION: Divide the group up into pairs. One pair at a time, each player tries to pull the other one over a central line, just like in a real tug of war.

Here, though, the rope isn't visible; it's made of space. Ask the learners to

**Choose a partner of equal strength!** This request will be met with a laugh.

A situation calling for mutual cooperation – not competition – will be created.

While one team plays, the others observe.

**Hold the rope together! Watch your back, your feet!  
Pull with your whole body! Keep to the same rope! Heave!  
Heave!**

Notes:

1. Keep on playing the rope and imaginary ball games until the phenomenon of the object taking shape in space rather than in the mind has been explored and understood by everybody in the group.

2. As soon as the group gets good at playing the game in pairs start adding more learners at both ends of the rope.

3. Implicit communication and understanding could provide an explanation for many exceptional events. Most scientists agree that sightings of flying saucers, abominable snowmen, etc. occur when a number of people simultaneously see something that isn't really there.

**Audience, were the learners pulling the same rope? Did the rope unite the two learners? Was it in space or in their minds? Learners, was the rope in space or in your minds? Do the learners agree with the audience? Does the audience agree with the learners?**

#### EXERCISE N°2 - SKIPPING

OBJECTIVE: to develop interaction between members in a big group, using spatial material

BASIC CONCEPT: keeping a rope moving in space

EXPLANATION: Divide up the class into groups of four or more, either with the counting method or randomly. Each group does skipping, with some members turning the rope and others skipping. Play until everybody has had the chance to turn the rope. (Turning the rope calls for more concentration than skipping).

**Keep to the same rope! Play with your whole body!  
Were the learners holding the rope in space or in their minds?**

Notes:

1. When the player doing the skipping makes a mistake he or she has to change places with the one turning the rope, just like in real skipping.
2. All the different varieties of real skipping can be used.

### EXERCISE N° 3 - BALL GAME

OBJECTIVE: to focus learners' attention on a moving imaginary object

BASIC CONCEPT: holding the ball in space and not in the mind.

EXPLANATION: The learners divide up into two big teams with the counting method. The teams take turns at being the audience. Each player in the team, by himself, starts bouncing the ball against a wall, etc. The balls are all made of spatial substance. When all the learners are moving, give the order to change the speed of the bouncing balls.

**Throw the ball using your whole body! Keep your eye on the ball: Change! Faster! Throw and catch the ball as fast as you can! Go back to normal speed!**

**Allow the right time for the ball to cross the space! The ball is moving very slowly! Catch the ball with very slow movements! Now the ball is moving at normal speed!**

**Alternative version: The ball's getting lighter! It's a hundred times lighter! Now it's getting heavy! Throw the ball using your whole body! Keep your eye on the ball!**

Notes:

1. The instructor has to choose his or her words carefully when describing the game. The learners are not being asked to pretend. The instructor simply has to suggest that they hold the ball in space and not in their minds.
2. A player knows whether the ball is in space or in his mind. When it's in space it "appears" before the eyes of the player and the audience.
3. The assessment questions are important because they recognise the fact that the audience is responsible for observing the appearance of the object, should this occur. The audience is just as responsible for keeping focused on the basic concept as the team playing the game is.
4. After assessing the first team, get the second team to play. Does the second team benefit from the assessment of the team before it?
5. Emphasise the need to use the whole body to keep the ball moving. After playing, learners should feel as if they've been in a fast-moving team race, in terms of physical effects.

*Learners, did you imagine the ball or really perceive it?  
Audience, do you agree with learners? Was the ball really made of space or were the learners pretending it was?*

*Learners, did you allow the right time for the ball to cross the space?*

*Audience, do you agree with this?*

Alternative versions:

1. Play the game with an imaginary ball that changes weight. When the ball gets heavier or lighter the learners' bouncing actions have to give the impression of being heavier or lighter or in slow motion. Don't divert the learners' attention on to this subject during the playing of the game.
2. Play other games - volleyball, baseball – with balls made of spatial substance.
3. Point out that different planets have different forces of gravity. Playing football on the moon would be much lighter than on the earth. Ask the learners what it would be like playing football on the moon.

#### EXERCISE N° 4 PLAYGROUND

OBJECTIVE: to discover different ways of using spatial substance in games

BASIC CONCEPT: keeping the play objects moving in space, letting them take space

EXPLANATION: The group divides up into teams picked by different numbers and each team chooses a game requiring equipment or special accessories (not just ball games like football, basketball or volleyball but also games played with things such as bowls or marbles). Whichever game is chosen, all its rules must be followed. The learners have to succeed in holding the ball or other accessories in space and not in their heads. The teams spread out around the classroom playing the different games simultaneously, like in a playground. The objects played with must be imaginary.

**Don't lose sight of your object! Use your whole body when you throw the ball!! Intensify the movement! More energy! Stronger!**

**Go from group to group and join in the game if your presence helps.**

Notes:

1. PLAYGROUND is ideal for moments of calm and relaxation.
2. If the learners start to get the idea of imaginary objects, the whole play area will be full of excitement, energy and fun. PLAYGROUND should be played often.
3. Games like this benefit from audience assessment. The suggestion made by teams acting as the audience can be *Keep your eye on the ball!*

*Audience, was the object being played with just an idea? Was it in space or pretend? Learners, do you agree with this?*

**Play with your whole body! Keep your eye on the ball! Hold the ball in space! No hits above the belt! Throw and catch with your whole body! (If the player in the middle is hit): Change places with the player that threw the ball!**

#### EXERCISE N° 5 – GAME FOR TWO

OBJECTIVE: to make the invisible visible using imaginary objects as props

BASIC CONCEPT: the object between two learners

EXPLANATION: Teams of two learners agree on an object and start an activity based on the object itself, such as folding sheets or unwrapping a sweet.

**Hold the object between you! Hold the object in space! Make the object real! Show it! Don't tell it! Use your whole body!**

Notes:

1. Learners will naturally want to plan the action beforehand, but this will result in them being awkward and lacking in spontaneity. To stop learners trying to invent a story rather than acting spontaneously – i.e. trying to construct a story mentally, like a playwright, then reciting it – get each team to write down the name of an object on a piece of paper, put all the pieces of paper in a hat and get each team to pick one out just before it's their turn.
2. The learners mustn't make up a story about the object, so there is no real need to talk. Suggest choosing an object that is widely used.
3. This is a conflict-free dramatic situation. Even though most dramaturgists argue that conflict is essential in a scene, good actors generally try to help each other during a performance.

*What was the object? Did the learners show it or tell it? Did the learners work together? Did this team benefit from the assessment of the previous one? Learners, do you agree with this?*

#### EXERCISE N°6 : GAME FOR THREE OR MORE

OBJECTIVE: to encourage team agreement and joint participation

BASIC CONCEPT: holding an object in the space between learners

EXPLANATION: Teams of three or more players. Agree on an object that can't be used without involving every member of the team. The players participate in a joint action in which everybody moves the same thing. For example: pulling up a fishing net, carrying a canoe, pushing a car that's broken down.

**Work together! You need each other to solve the problem! Hold the object in space! Hold the object between you!**

*Were the learners working together? Or was one of them not needed for the task? Learners, did you need each other for moving the object? Audience, do you agree with this? Did this team benefit from previous assessments?*

Note: The reciprocal involvement of learners by means of an object in GAME FOR TWO and TUG OF WAR is virtually automatic. This game, however, can tend to confuse learners at times; for example, there is a risk that the players will let themselves be led by a single participant, rather than everybody participating in the same way.

## EXERCISE N° 7 – FINDING OBJECTS IN THE IMMEDIATE SURROUNDINGS

OBJECTIVE: to make the invisible visible

BASIC CONCEPT: making use of the things the immediate surroundings can offer

EXPLANATION: Three or more learners agree on simple forms of relationships and conversations capable of involving all the members of the team, such as a parent-teacher meeting or a family reunion. The conversation can take place around a table made of space. In the meeting, each participant has to find and use as many objects as possible. The learners mustn't plan in advance what these objects will be.

**Take all the time you need! Let the objects appear!  
Continue the conversation! Join in and make your voice heard!  
The objects have to emerge from space! Help the teammate who isn't playing!**

Notes:

1. This game presents a dual problem. The main occupation in the scene, the meeting, must have continuity, but the occupation the game is based on, the basic concept, must always be kept in mind. Some learners will put their efforts into making the meeting a success but neglect the basic concept. Organise your assistance accordingly!

2. When this problem has been solved all the learners will start enjoying themselves tremendously and endless things will start appearing: a thread on somebody's jacket, dust floating in the air, pencils behind people's ears. All learners will have the chance to make new discoveries for themselves.

*Did the objects really appear or were they invented? Did the learners see their teammates' objects and use them? Did the learners allude to the objects or relate to them? Learners, did you let the objects appear?*

## EXERCISE n° 8 – DIFFICULTIES WITH SMALL OBJECTS

OBJECTIVE: to tackle the problems presented by imaginary objects

BASIC CONCEPT: overcoming the difficulties inherent in certain objects

EXPLANATION: The learners, working individually, grapple with small imaginary objects or items of clothing that present some kind of problem, for example: opening a hermetically sealed container, struggling with a stuck zip, a blocked drawer, over-tight boots, etc.

**Make the object real! Get the audience to join in!  
Explore the object! Increase the difficulty!**

Notes:

1. When the learners seem ready, two or more of them can play the game together.
2. A refusal to keep to the basic concept shows that the player in question is tending to intellectualise the problem (by inventing a story) rather than facing up to the material difficulty presented by the object. For instance, if the problem is a hole in a shoe a player could react with a "joke" by fixing it with a banknote; this can only be seen as a way of avoiding the exercise.

*Audience: what was the object?*

## EXERCISE N° 9- OBJECT MOVES LEARNERS

OBJECTIVE: to give movement, or even life, to imaginary objects

BASIC CONCEPT: an object that moves the learners.

EXPLANATION: The learners, sorted by different numbers, agree on an object, such as a sailing dinghy, a roller-coaster, an elephant, etc., that is capable of moving everybody simultaneously.

**Feel the object! Let the object move you! You're on it all together! Don't make it disappear! Show the life in the object using your whole body! Feel the object moving you! Let yourselves be moved by the object!**

Alternative version: Get each player to choose an object which is either living or has different possible ways of moving: a cat, an insect, a yo-yo, a kite, etc. The nature and identity of the object are communicated to the audience by the way the learners use it.

Notes:

1. If everybody focuses totally on the moving object, the learners will really start to perceive the object amongst them and the audience will be able to recognise it.
2. Learners who are unable to concentrate at first might be tempted to look at the others to know when they have to move. Keep on suggesting **Let the object move you** to help them break this habit.



## **PART TWO**

### **Deepening the Bonds Between Learners.**

#### BONDS BETWEEN LEARNERS

Becoming or being part of a whole means creating a single entity in which everybody (the learners on stage, the audience and the teachers) is directly involved in the game and committed to its outcome, supporting each other reciprocally in a mutually satisfying process. Each participant, working with body, mind and intuition to bring out his or her subjective energy, must attempt to surpass all past limits in the process of cooperating with the other players. The learner, supported by those around him, feels free to play; the group acts as if it were a single person.

The effort spent and the resulting success (if achieved) are equally shared by all, as parts of a whole.

A player starts to understand that you can't play tag unless there's somebody to chase you; a football team starts to see the other side not as adversaries but as a set of fellow players – it is at this point that both teams will become part of a (harmonious) whole and everybody will start giving and taking and getting the same satisfaction out of it. This is what we call **play!**

Competitions that involve breaking existing records – in sport, music and other fields – were probably invented because of the pure pleasure, euphoria and exaltation of surpassing limits (plants getting taller to reach the sun, man landing on the moon).

**Don't encourage competition by praising the “better” players and highlighting the failings of the “less able” ones.**

A significant success for one becomes a success for all. Willingness, interaction, attention, observation, physical and verbal vocal expression, narrative ability, sensory agility, emotional self-awareness and many other qualities develop more easily when students become part of a whole.

#### **Important concepts, terms and expressions in this section**

*Freedom*: a discovery made during the workshops when learners, as parts of a whole, acknowledge not only existing limits but also the right to explore ways of surpassing them.

*Community (harmony, unity)*: a spirit that establishes itself in the classroom environment when people start contributing individually to the solution of shared problems; it releases laughter and individual initiative and heightens self-belief.

*Don't tell it! Show it!*: aims to help learners make objects, relationships, and their own involvement physically evident, putting themselves in the background. The objective is to achieve subjective communication.

*Share your voice!*: encourages self-projection and a sense of responsibility before an audience.

**Use your whole body to play your chosen part! Join the game! Be brave!**  
**Change! Transform to another part! There are no right ways and wrong ways!**

#### EXERCISE n° 10- PART OF A WHOLE (OBJECT)

OBJECTIVE: to create an interdependent relationship between learners

BASIC CONCEPT: becoming part of something bigger

EXPLANATION: A player enters the game area and becomes part of a bigger object or organism (animal, vegetable or mineral).

Examples: a machine, the gears of a clock, abstract mechanisms, animals, elements of nature. As soon as another player guesses the object's identity, he or she joins the game and becomes part of the whole. The game continues until everybody becomes part of it, working together to form the complete object. Learners are free to choose any movement or position and imitate any sound in their contribution to completing the object.

*What was the complete object? What did you think it was before you joined the game?*

Notes:

1. This game can be useful as a warm-up, or as an exercise to close the workshop session, in that it releases spontaneity and stimulates group energy. Learners often move away from the first participant's original idea and lose themselves in fanciful abstractions.
2. The instructor must help any learners in difficulty, such as those hesitating to join the group because of a fear of getting the object wrong, or those wanting to add their part too quickly before having a clear idea of what the whole object is.
3. This game is also widely known as THE MACHINE.

#### EXERCISE N°11 PART OF A WHOLE (ACTIVITY)

OBJECTIVE: cooperation in an on-stage activity

BASIC CONCEPT: showing the wholeness of a shared activity by taking part in it.

EXPLANATION: Big teams are needed, ten to fifteen learners each. A player is selected. This player has to decide secretly on a task for the group and perform an activity inherent in this task. When the nature of the whole activity becomes clear, other learners start joining in, one at a time, playing a part in the task. An example could be doing a garden: the first player rakes the leaves into a heap, the second one digs with a spade, the third one spreads fertiliser, etc.

**Show! Don't tell! No dialogues!  
Waiting learners, allow yourselves time to see what's  
happening! Risk it! Join in the activity! Become part of  
the whole!**

#### Notes

1. The interaction within the group should generate a flow of energy. Keep repeating the game until this happens; stop, though, if it doesn't seem to be getting anywhere.
2. The learners mustn't know in advance what the first participant is doing.
3. Any learners who didn't join in because they were worried about not having understood the game can be reassured during the assessment, when they can be made to realise that not all the learners had the same idea about the common activity.
4. Even though the play area might seem chaotic with all the learners moving about and talking at the same time, resist the temptation to make it more orderly. The initial fun and euphoria are essential to the group's social growth.
5. PLAYGROUND is a good introduction to this game.

#### EXERCISE N° 12 – PART OF A WHOLE (JOB)

OBJECTIVE: to define a character by a typical kind of behaviour

BASIC CONCEPT: assuming a role in a work activity

EXPLANATION: The teams, with five or six members, choose the first player. This player thinks of a job, without telling anybody what it is, and starts doing an activity inherent in the job. The other learners join in one at a time as clearly defined characters (the *who*), starting or joining in with an activity related to the job in question. For example, the first player washes her hands and then waits, holding her hands up; the second player, playing the role of the nurse, enters the play area and helps the doctor put her gloves on. The other learners can be anaesthetists, patients, internists, etc.

**Show! Don't tell! Join in the activity as clearly defined  
characters! Become part of the whole! Show your feelings  
and intentions throughout the activity! (If a dialogue starts)  
join in with your voice!**

*What was the group's activity? Learners, were you part of the  
whole? Was it possible to carry out other activities in the plan?  
Were the objects in space? Audience: do you agree with the  
players?*

#### Notes:

1. The learners mustn't know in advance what the first player is doing or portraying.
2. If the learners talk too much instead of acting, or get agitated purposelessly, then the basic concept of the game isn't clear enough. Take a break, or switch to another game.

3. Even though this exercise includes the *Who*, stress that the basic concept is the activity; otherwise, the learners will start "reciting".

4. If learners find it difficult to relate to a certain job, point out to them that people in different jobs have different attitudes and interests. Doctors, writers, plumbers, postmen, security guards and estate agents going into the same room would notice different things and show different interests.

*Audience, what was the job? Did the learners show it or tell it? Learners, do you agree with this? What did you think the job was before joining the game? Audience: do you have anything else to say about what you saw?*

### EXERCISE N°13 – PART OF A WHOLE (RELATIONSHIP)

OBJECTIVE: to define a character by its human relationships

BASIC CONCEPT: communicating the *Who* (the relationship) by means of an activity

EXPLANATION: Divide the group up into teams of five or more. One participant starts a simple activity without choosing a character. The other learners choose a relationship with the player on stage and, one at a time, join in the activity. The first player has to accept and relate to the learners joining the action as if he knows what relationship they are portraying.

Example: A man is hanging a picture up. A woman comes in and says the picture would be better higher up. The man accepts the woman as his wife and carries on with the job. Other learners take the roles of sons, daughters, neighbours, etc. They all show what kind of relationship it is with the activity.

**Don't tell, show! Keep doing the activity! Don't try and guess; there's no rush! Act so that your character emerges through the activity! As soon as you discover who you are, show it by playing the role! (If a dialogue starts) join in with your voice! Act so that the character is revealed with the activity!**

Notes:

1. This game outlines an on-stage event based on the basic concept (i.e. the first signs of a relationship) and not simply on a set of simultaneous activities.
2. Try to resist the temptation of making the scene more orderly.

*Audience: who were the learners? What were the relationships? Did the learners reveal who they were through the activity?*

*Learners: when you joined the game did you know what your role was? What is your best friend's most typical action or mannerism? What are the noticeable habits of your favourite TV personalities? Have you ever imitated members of your family or other people you admire? Do you know any families whose members all do things in the same way?*



## **PART THREE**

### **LITERACY: Communicating with Words**

Most drama games involve dialogue, but the fear of verbal exchange can be a difficult obstacle to overcome. In the first games, where the players join in with an action (such as PART OF A WHOLE, ACTIVITY), some of the learners might start referring to some words; if this happens it's a good idea to say *Share your voice!*

Learners might also ask: "can we talk?". If they want to talk, encourage them cautiously. The games in imaginary language described so far are actually based on a level of communication that is non-verbal; in the games, verbalisation can be limited or even prohibited, in order to restrain the tendency to communicate exclusively with words.

The basic concept of the games to follow, on the other hand, is to have the word as the main object.

### **When you stay focused on the game you don't have time to worry about what other people think.**

To stop inexperienced learners expressing themselves in an overly stilted way, the dialogue part should be tied to at least one other solid basic concept. Multiple stimuli can create the right kind of tension to get over this problem. The learners will be so absorbed in the effort of keeping focused on the basic concept that the dialogue will flow naturally, avoiding the stiltedness of forcing yourself to appear happy, fascinating, sad or whatever. Over time, the learners, concentrating on the basic concept, will acquire the certainty that the right words will come by themselves, without having to think about it. In the games, just as in everyday life, words can be used to say what somebody wants to hear and hide what they need to know.

### **Warm-up and preparatory exercises**

The exercises done with the learners aren't just drama exercises involving body and voice expression; they are also, and above all, oral expression exercises regarding vocabulary and oral expression. In these exercises, attention is focused on good articulation, tone, intensity, quantity, accentuation and pauses. The aim of all these exercises is to improve vocabulary, increase verbal expression, improve articulatory agility and the relating of words to emotions.

Form a circle, point to another person and say the name of a woman or a man. The person pointed to then points to somebody else and says the name of another woman or man.

Point to another person and say either "ground", "sea" or "air". The person pointed to has to name a ground, sea or air animal, depending on which was said.

Point to another person and say names of trees.

Point to another person and say names of flowers.

Point to another person and say an adjective that seems to suit them.

Point to another person and name an animal that seems to correspond to them.

Tell the story of a western film, but with each person saying one word only and following a sequence.

Ask in a high voice and answer in a low voice

Say some names of jobs to another person.

Say some words to do with love.

Say some insults using augmentatives and diminutives.

Whisper a little story in the ear of the next player. This player then whispers it to the next one and so on until it goes all round the circle and gets back to the one who started it. How has the initial story changed?

Somebody names an animal and the others imitate its call.

In pairs, one names a job and the other names three actions related to it.

Example: gardener - irrigate, plant, gather leaves.

Game: newspaper headline

In a circle, somebody whispers a newspaper headline to the person next to him. The headline goes from ear to ear all round the circle and then you see what it ends up as.

In a circle, point to somebody and name an animal the person reminds you of. The person "does" the animal.

In a circle, everybody has to point to somebody else and ask them to talk about a wish, a dream or a love, telling little stories.

One is blindfolded, the other asks him questions. The blindfolded one has to answer in three different ways:

- 1- with noises only
- 2- talking, but always telling lies
- 3- talking, but always telling the truth

## Writing and Reading: Specific Exercises

### EXERCISE N°14 – BIG WRITING

OBJECTIVE: to discover the power of a single word or phrase

BASIC CONCEPT: writing words as big as possible

EXPLANATION: All the learners, one at a time, have to try and fill the blackboard by writing their favourite word or expression.

**Use your whole body to fill the blackboard!  
Write the word as big as you can! Fill the whole  
space with your word! Hear the word!**

*Have the players filled the space? Or could they  
have filled a bigger space on the blackboard?*

Note 1: Don't worry about spelling or handwriting in this exercise. The learners trying the hardest to keep to the basic concept will probably be the ones most likely to make spelling mistakes or write badly. The players are being asked only to fill up as big a space as possible with a word or expression.

Note 2: Later on (another day) the instructor will organise a proper grammar lesson on the mistakes that were made in the game.

### EXERCISE N° 15 – SMALL WRITING

OBJECTIVE: to discover the independent existence of a word or phrase

BASIC CONCEPT: writing words or sentences as little as possible

EXPLANATION: Each learner works individually at their own desk with pencil and paper. Their hands are still but their entire bodies move. The learners think of and write their favourite words, expressions and sentences, trying to use as little space as possible.

**Write small! Small! Very small! Let your body work!  
Keep your hands still and see what happens! Think about  
the words and sentences you're writing!**

*Learners, hand your sheets of paper in. Are the words  
readable by somebody else, written so small?*

#### Notes

1. Here too, don't worry about spelling or style. The learners simply have to try and write the words as small as possible.
2. Learners enjoy themselves tremendously in this exercise. Try doing it again from time to time. If it gets frustrating, stop immediately!

## EXERCISE N°16- WRITING BLINDFOLDED

OBJECTIVE: to acquire a new familiarity with a word or an expression

BASIC CONCEPT: writing words or sentences without looking

EXPLANATION: The learners, either sitting at their desks or at the blackboard, try to write words or sentences with their eyes closed. Using a blindfold makes the game more fun.

Note: Spelling and style are not so important; the important thing is the learners' ability to decipher other people's words and sentences.

**Cross your t's! Dot your i's! When you've finished, look at what you've written! Do it again! Keep your eyes closed and let your hands do the writing!**

*Did the learners cross all their t's and dot all their i's?  
Can you read the words and sentences the others wrote?  
Player, can you read the words and sentences you wrote yourself?*

## EXERCISE N°17- NAMING SIX

OBJECTIVE: helping to learn how to use words quickly and fluently

BASIC CONCEPT: quickly naming six objects that start with the same letter

EXPLANATION: All the learners sit down in a circle, except for one, who stands in the middle. The one in the middle keeps his eyes closed while the others pass a small object round from hand to hand. At a certain point the player in the middle claps his hands, sees which player is holding the object at that moment and says a letter of the alphabet (there's no need to hide the object from the player in the middle). The player with the object starts passing it again straight away, and before it does the complete round of the circle and gets back to him he has to name six objects starting with the chosen letter. If he can't do it, he has to change places with the player in the middle. If the circle is small, the object should do two or more rounds.

Notes:

1. This traditional game is useful as a warm-up, for settling the group down.
2. The game is easily adaptable for normal lessons, by choosing as a subject something that the learners have to memorise: six numbers that can be divided by four, six parts of the body, six counties, six verbs, etc. Sometimes the game works better if the player in the middle is the instructor.

## EXERCISE N°18 – GIVE AND TAKE - WARM-UP

OBJECTIVE: to help learners reach a group agreement

BASIC CONCEPT: seeing and hearing

EXPLANATION: The learners form a circle. Any player can start doing a movement. If a participant moves, the others have to make her freeze (pause).

Any player can decide to move at any time, but has to freeze if another player anticipates her. Sounds are considered as movements. A player "takes" when she sees another player move ("give").

Note: "Freeze" is a more appropriate term here than "stop". A "stop" is a complete break, whereas a "freeze" is a wait that can transform suddenly into rapid movement.

**Freeze the movement! Don't interrupt the flow of the movement! Freeze when another player moves! Give!**

#### EXERCISE N°19- GIVE AND TAKE

OBJECTIVE: to reach a non-verbal agreement with a partner while being ready, in the meantime, to act with the other team

BASIC CONCEPT: listening/hearing with a partner to know when to give and when to take

EXPLANATION (Two tables and two chairs will be useful in this exercise)

The learners divide up into teams of four. Each team then divides into two.

These subgroups (each sitting at their own table) take part in separate conversations. At the same time, they have to listen and be aware of the other subgroup's movements in order to know when to give and when to take.

Part 1: The instructor keeps calling *Table 1!* and *Table 2!* until the game is clear to both subgroups. The subgroups start their conversations at the same time. When Table 1 is called, subgroup 2 has to "eclipse". When it's table 2's turn, subgroup 1 has to eclipse.

The learners must understand the difference between eclipse and stop. The learners no longer centre stage have to freeze their actions, relationship and dialogue, keeping quiet and still but ready to continue actively when it's their turn to take the stage again.

**Table 1! Table 2! Eclipse! Keep your relationship going even if you're eclipsed! Don't stop! Sit back, relax and keep still!**

**Table 2! Table 1! Eclipse!**

Part 2: as soon as the subgroups have understood how the reciprocal exchange mechanism works they will be asked to carry on playing without any assistance, continuing with their conversations and giving and taking the stage.

Part 2: **Give! Play! Play as if you were all one!**

Part 3: continuing as described above, each subgroup tries to take the stage from the other. The subgroup that takes the stage gets the audience's attention.

Part 3: **Take! Take!** (until they take the stage). The audience will know when a subgroup has taken the stage.

Part 4: both subgroups give and take the stage without any assistance.

Part 4: **Do it yourselves! Give and take! Try to know the right moment to give! Try to know the right moment to take!**

Notes: The learners in the subgroups learn to give and take as if they were all one, thus developing communication and comprehension skills at a non-verbal level.

*Subgroup 1, did you have any problems knowing when your partner wanted to give?*

*Audience, could you see when one member of a subgroup didn't want to give and the other did?*

*Learners, in Part 4 of the exercise, did you take the stage before the other team gave it?*

*Other subgroup, do you agree with this? Audience: do you agree with this?*

2. Use *Give and take* in your assistance in other games too, whenever the learners speak and move simultaneously without listening. This will help the learners to find the scene's focal point.
3. See below for the use of *Give and take!* in another game.

#### Exercise N°20 GIVE AND TAKE - READING

OBJECTIVE: encouraging learners to give their full attention to others

BASIC CONCEPT: trying to seize opportunities to read aloud

EXPLANATION: The learners divide up into teams of balanced reading ability. Everybody reads the same passage at the same time, to themselves, giving any group members who want to read aloud the opportunity to do so. Only one player at a time can read aloud. A participant can take the opportunity to read – from another player – whenever he or she wants. Preferably, these changes should be frequent. Skipping words or repeating the last words of the previous reader are not allowed.

*Only if necessary: **Give when somebody takes! Take when somebody gives! Stay on the exact words that have just been read! Only one participant at a time can read! Share your voice!***

*Was the reading as flowing as it would have been if it had been read by one person? Or was it full of breaks, restarts and repetitions?*

Note 1: The frequent gives and takes, and the fact that some of the changes are made right in the middle of a word or sentence, make the reading fun and exciting.

## EXERCISE N°21 – SEEING WORDS

OBJECTIVE: to heighten the stimulation of sensory perceptions

BASIC CONCEPT: the narrated event

EXPLANATION: A single participant enters and describes a real experience, such as a journey, watching a football match or going to see somebody. The participant has to keep focused both on the basic concept (the event) and the assistance. The important thing is to keep talking while listening simultaneously to the instructor's suggestions.

**Focus on the colours! The sounds! The time! The people! The smells! Try to picture yourself!**

Note: As the assistance reawakens the participant's sensations, try to notice at what point these sensations move away from the *word* and start referring to the *scene*. The voice will become natural, the body will appear more relaxed and the words will flow rapidly. When the participant breaks free from depending on the words and concentrates on the environment that evoked them, the narration will no longer seem unnatural and stilted. A past event becomes a present experience.

*Did the scene seem real? Could you picture yourself on a journey with the narrator?*

## EXERCISE N°22 – MIRROR SPEECH

OBJECTIVE: to follow another person's words, creating a dialogue

BASIC CONCEPT: mirroring the words of another person out loud

EXPLANATION: Two learners, facing each other, choose a topic of conversation. One of them starts telling and the other one mirrors his or her words *out loud*. They both say the same words out loud at exactly the same time. On the order **Change!** the roles are reversed. The mirrorer becomes the teller and vice versa. These role changes should be seamless, without interrupting the flow of words. After a while the instructor will stop ordering the changes. The learners will "follow each other", thinking and saying the same words simultaneously with no conscious effort.

**Mirrorer, say the same word! Mirror what you hear!  
Mirror the question! Don't answer it! Share your voice!  
Change mirrorer! Keep the words flowing between you; Say the same word! Change! Change!**

*(When the learners start talking as if with one voice, with no time lag): Follow the teller! Follow each other!*

*Audience, were the learners saying the same word at the same time? Could you hear when they started to follow each other? Everybody, what's the difference between repeating speech and mirroring it?*

#### Notes

1. The instructor should advise the teller to avoid questions. If a question is asked the mirrorer should simply *mirror* the question and not *answer* it.
2. The difference between repeating and mirroring has to be understood and felt by the whole body (all the senses) before "following each other" can happen. In real mirroring the time lag between telling and mirroring is tiny, almost non-existent. In a certain sense, the learners come to a perfect agreement on the same word and become a single mind, open to reciprocal communication.
3. If lesson time is limited, divide the group up into teams of three, one of whom will be the instructor. All the teams play at the same time in different areas of the room.
4. This game can also be played mirroring the teller's words silently.

#### EXERCISE N°23 VERBALISING THE "WHERE" PART 1

OBJECTIVE: to make learners more aware of their environment

BASIC CONCEPT: keeping focused on the *Where* and verbalising all the contacts, observations and relationships occurring in the meantime

EXPLANATION: Two learners choose a **Where**, a **Who** and a **What** and sit down in the game area. Without getting out of their chair, they improvise an event (scene), verbally describing their actions in the **Where** and the relationships that link them to the other learners. Any necessary dialogue is spoken directly to the other participant, interrupting the narrative. All verbs in the present tense.

**Keep the EXPLANATION in the present tense! Describe the objects that can be seen in the Where! Describe the other learners for us! Keep your opinions out of the EXPLANATION! Imagine that it's you yourselves in action! Use dialogue if it seems necessary! Describe the touch sensations felt by your hands on the chair! No opinions! That's an attitude! A preconception!**

Example: Participant 1: "I tie the strings of my red and white apron around my waist and go to the cloth-bound cookery book on the table. I sit at the table and open the book, looking for a recipe..."

Participant 2: "I open the folding door and rush into the kitchen. Dammit, I ran into the door again!" "Hey, Mammy, I'm hungry. What's for dinner?"

*Was the player in the Where? Was the player inside his mind (giving information, judging, expressing opinions and showing attitudes related to his way of thinking)? Learners, do you agree with this? Could anything else have been added? Could the story have gone another way? How would it have ended? What other*

*characters would you have wanted in it? How would you have changed the Where?*

Notes:

1. This exercise can be useful for dispelling learners' preconceptions and attitudes in their work.
2. Don't go on to the next game until all the learners have understood and successfully applied the basic concept.
3. So-called observation is usually linked to personal attitudes – seeing something on the basis of rights and wrongs, prejudices, preconceptions, etc. – exactly the opposite of simply seeing the things around you. If learners can limit themselves simply to seeing, here and now, it will open previously closed doors in both their speaking and writing.

## EXERCISE N°24 - VERBALISING THE “WHERE” PART 2

OBJECTIVE: to make the invisible visible

BASIC CONCEPT: prolonging the material reality constructed in VERBALISING THE “WHERE” PART 1

EXPLANATION: The same learners who were seated in VERBALISING THE “WHERE” PART 1 now stand up to act out the real event (the scene). There is no longer any need to describe the actions, as in Part 1; speak only when dialogue is necessary.

**Prolong the physical sensations of the Where - - smells, colours, materials – communicate them! Don't say them in words!**

*Learners, was the first part of this game helpful for creating the scene in Part 2? Was acting the scene or the event easier because you'd talked about it before? Audience, when the actors stood up did the scene or event acquire more depth? Did the improvised scenes seem more expressive than usual? Did the learners seem to be more involved and harmonious? Learners, do you agree with this?*

Notes:

1. If the basic idea of Part 1 was helpful to the learners, the *Where* with its imaginary objects should become visible to all the observers (the invisible becomes visible).
2. Any of the narrated details can be left out of the acted scene.
3. If the narrated part of this exercise was based on learners' ways of thinking rather than on the details of the material reality that surrounds them, Part 2 will be nothing more than a soap opera.
4. Note how, in these scenes, when the real improvisation starts, the tendency for the learners to pretend will disappear without a trace.

