



Multilingual Performance Project



GET INVOLVED!

This pack has been produced to introduce you to the **Multilingual Performance Project** and to give you some 'do-it-yourself' multilingual performance ideas to try out in your school.

The exciting **Multilingual Performance Project** reaches across England and Wales to showcase and celebrate the multilingual nature of schools and demonstrate how multilingualism can interact creatively with teaching in the classroom, promoting both taught languages and the use of community languages.

Our aims include:

- Building confidence among MFL teachers in conducting creative work in school, increasing awareness of the creative dimension of languages.
- Connecting schools with our project, with each other and with local theatres.
- Celebrating the multilingual nature of schools, and demonstrating how this can interact with modern foreign languages as taught in the classroom, building confidence among learners from multilingual backgrounds and showcasing their home languages.
- Promoting internationalism in schools, encouraging students' interest in other countries and cultures.

If you find this pack's activities useful, want advice on how to adapt them, or if you have other exercises you use and would like to share then please get in touch - daniel.tyler-mctighe@mod-langs.ox.ac.uk

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creative
multilingualism

*Releasing the creative potential of modern languages
Making linguistic diversity more visible, valued, and vibrant
Inspiring learners. Empowering communities. Invigorating research*

The **Multilingual Performance Project** is an initiative of **Creative Multilingualism**, a four-year research programme funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council in the context of its Open World Research Initiative. **Creative Multilingualism** is investigating the interconnection between linguistic diversity and creativity, and rethinking the identity of Modern Languages. It aims to strengthen the identity of the discipline, enhancing the visibility and status of languages in society, and giving a new impetus to language learning in schools. To find out more, please visit: www.creativeml.ox.ac.uk

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ACTIVITIES: Drama Games & Theatre Exercises

All of the games and exercises that follow can be adapted to be bi- or multi-lingual or be fully transposed into different languages within a vibrant multilingual environment. Some of these activities and others can be seen online at: <https://www.creativeml.ox.ac.uk/resources/multilingual-drama-teaching-activities>

BUSY BEES (AKA BUZZY BEES)

This is a great way to energise the room, as well as being a really interesting way to test students' vocabulary and quick thinking! Played in another language, it's a great vocabulary test for students.

You need a bit of space for this one, but a classroom with space between desks can do.

- The game leader stands at the head of the room and shouts "Busy Bees BUZZ!"
- Students begin to "buzz" around the room.
- The Game leader then calls "Busy Bees make something beginning with..." and chose a letter of the alphabet; the game leader begins counting down from 5.
- Each student must then freeze in a statue of something beginning with that letter. (For example, the letter "L" might yield statues of lions, lemons, legs, leaves, luscious lips, ladders...).
- The GL then proceeds to ask each student what they are representing. Any students who have the same as someone else are out; likewise, any student who has not managed to think of something is out.
- The game continues, with fewer and fewer people in each round, until a winner (or winners) are declared. Extra praise may be given for any exemplary statues created.

ILLNESSES AND INJURIES

A great game for any age and skill level.

From basic vocabulary about body parts and health to complicated sentence structure and the use of past/present tense, all skill levels can take part in this activity, and everyone loves sharing a good story about how they got that interesting scar...

- Each person must first think of an illness or injury they have suffered (and are willing to share with the class!) and the story that surrounds it (i.e. "when I was on holiday with my Dad I fell off my bike and broke my collarbone.")
- Participants then show, physically, how they would look with that illness or injury (i.e. holding collarbone and grimacing). The Game Leader scans the room, and when everyone has a clear statue they can begin.
- Each person must walk (or limp!) around the room with their illness/injury. When they meet another person they must swap stories, and then absorb the other person's injury/illness with their own. (Broken collar bone meets someone with food poisoning from a wedding. They swap stories and walk away both with a broken collar bone AND food poisoning.)
- They might then meet someone else, speak about both of their current illnesses/injuries and also have to absorb the two illnesses and injuries of the other person. (Broken collar bone and food poisoning meets up with someone who broke an ankle playing football and has also cut open their finger whilst cooking. They both now have all four illnesses/injuries.)
- Depending on group size/ability, set a limit on how many interactions each person should have. When they reach the limit (i.e. two interactions/four injuries) they should again freeze, showing the GL what they now look like.
- Once everyone is frozen, the Game Leader can choose particularly interesting looking statues to share their stories. (i.e. "I was on holiday with my Dad and I fell off my bike and broke my collarbone, and the next day I went to a wedding and got food poisoning. Then I decided to play football to make myself feel better and broke my ankle. I thought a sandwich would be the easiest thing to make to settle my stomach and cut my finger open...")

WORKING WITH SCRIPTS

Any script, whether written by the teacher or the students themselves or a published text can be used to enliven a classroom. Ask students to consider not only the vocabulary needed but the structure of the sentences and their impact, the grammar, the sound of the words and their foreign language counterpart, and the cultural references in a text. All of these things can be a great tool for engaging students in the power of language.

You could:

- Find/write a scene with two characters. Play the scene in English. Play it again with one person speaking English and one in the subject language. Can they retain the sense of the scene? Which words are important?
- Play the scene again with them both having translated the text – does it feel the same as in English? Are there any words/phrases that DON'T translate? Why?

WINTER IS...

A lovely way to study some of the cultural differences and similarities between the student's culture and the subject language.

Again, adapt to the numbers and skill set of your group.

- A class is split in half. One group (A) decides what things make up a traditional British winter (i.e. snow, Christmas, delayed trains, hot chocolate and marshmallows, open fires, 'flu, snotty colds, woolly hats etc...). The other group decides what makes up the "winter" of the subject culture. (Resources or independent research time will be needed for this exercise.)
- After a time, each group will present their findings. A speaker/small group of speakers will read out "Winter is..." and the various things they have decided represent that, whilst the rest of the team act out/mime those things behind them. The next team shows the class what "Winter is..." for the subject language.
- The groups then swap; the team who had looked at British winter then look at the subject language summer, and visa-versa.

This could be done with any festival/season that is culturally appropriate.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

A short, fun game to work on those verbs!

- The first student ("A") stands and mimes an activity.
- The second student ("B") asks "what are you doing?".
- "A" replies with a new activity, which "B" must then begin to mime.
- This continues until everyone has had a turn.

For example, "A" begins to mime digging a hole. "B" asks, "what are you doing?". "A" replies "I'm dancing to Night Fever!" and sits down, whilst B must begin to do the Night Fever dance until the next student asks "what are you doing?".

INTERNATIONAL PERSON OF MYSTERY

This is a quick warm-up game which gets participants focused and uses some basic vocabulary.

- Everyone stands in a circle.
- A nominated person points at someone and says 'double' (*doble, doppelt, double*)
- This person points at someone and says 'o' (there may not be a translatable 'o' meaning 'zero!')
- This person points at someone and says 'seven' (*siete, Sieben, Sept*)
- This person 'becomes' James Bond and shoots someone with a 'bang'
- The person who has been shot ducks to avoid the bullet and the two people either side put their hands up and gasp.
- Participants are eliminated if they do any of the actions described above incorrectly, or after some practice too slowly.



WOULD I LIE TO YOU?

Based on the TV programme of the same name, a good fun way to share stories and work collaboratively.

Depending on how much time you have and how many participants you will be including, you can re-work this in various ways to best suit your needs. Below is a basic structure which you can then adapt.

- Split the group into small teams (i.e. four groups of three).
- In groups, each person must share a story based upon the Game Leader's choice of topic. You could do "Best Birthday Ever", "Most Embarrassing Moment", "Favourite Holiday Memory" or whatever suits your topic/class. The Game Leader re-iterates that the stories must be TRUE.
- The groups then decide which story will be the hardest one for the other teams to guess who it belongs to, and rehearse it, each telling it as if it is their own story.
- Teams take it in turns to present their stories. For example, Team A stand and each person tells the same story as if it has happened to them. Teams B, C and D deliberate amongst themselves and vote who they think it really belongs to. Each team who has guessed correctly gets a point. Team A gets a point for every team that guesses *incorrectly*. Teams B, C and D get their turn.

Teams can work together to work out how to tell the tale in the subject language, or more advanced students can tell their original stories in the subject language.

PROPS

Props can be used in a variety of ways to stimulate a speaking in another language. Here's a few ideas:

- **What is it?**
A plain object is passed around the circle, and each person must come up with a variation on what it is. i.e. a cardboard box is passed around. The first person says "It's a cage I keep my mice in," the next "my best hat", the next person "my new baby brother."
- **I found this...**
Two people must create the most interesting story about where they got a certain prop from. The story voted most interesting by the class wins.
- **It's mine!**
In pairs, the students devise short scenes based on them both wanting to possess a certain prop. You could have a bag of 15 random objects, one is given to each pair and they must devise a scene based on the desire for that prop.
- **1, 3, 5...**
A prop is given to each small group. Atmospheric music could be played to support the scenes. Groups must devise a short scene based on the prop but are only allowed to use one (or three, or five) words. By limiting the number of words used, you are allowing students with various levels of ability to contribute, as well as challenging groups to think carefully about the power and importance of certain words.

THE SUN SHINES ON

This game would work best with students have a grasp of adjectives and human characteristics, likes and so on.

- The whole group sit on chairs in a circle with one person stood in the middle of the circle (with no available seat). This person wants to win a chair by making people leave their place and go to another chair.
- This is done by the person in the middle saying "The sun shines on..." (or the MFL translation) and then completing the phrase with a characteristic that could be true of more than one seated person (e.g. women, people who like chocolate, anyone wearing green). If the statement is true of them each player must leave their chair and run to another chair before the person in the middle steals a chair. No-one can return to the same chair in that round.
- There should be a regular turnover of who is in the middle.
- Continue playing rounds for as long as you like!

PLAYWRITING SCHEME OF WORK

This is an example of a scheme of work in which students work towards creating performance that can easily be adapted to integrate different languages or support the students to create their first fully foreign language play. The exercises described in the scheme of work can be used with primary students upwards and can, of course, be adapted to be more complex for older students. At the end of the scheme is an example of an activity on building a character which would be used for older, more advanced students.

SESSION 1

- **Introduction** and explanation of how the project will run over the next few weeks.
- **Discussion:** What is a play? Main components are stage directions, characters and dialogue. You can facilitate this in whatever way you like, you could use the board to write an example of a very simple play set in a classroom with the group and then have volunteers act it out. The aim is to understand the difference between a play and a story and how they are set out on a page.
- **Exercise on character names.** A student writes their own first name on the board and then jumble the letters round to make 3 new possible names. The class can then choose their favourite. Then give out scrap paper and ask all students to do this exercise individually until they each have a new character name.
- **Exercise on simple characteristics.** Draw a table with two columns: happy and sad. Write one of the students' new character names vertically. As a group choose something this character likes and something they dislike for each letter and fill out the table on the board. Again, ask students to all do this exercise individually.
- **Extra, fun activity:** Give everyone an A5 piece of scrap paper and ask them to design their character. No colouring in...just sketching. They can then decide on final character name. It does not need to be one of the anagrams you have completed before as can be informed by how they have designed them.

SESSION 2

This is all about getting the students to collaborate on writing the play in pairs or small groups.

- **Discussion of narrative.** Give examples of stories with clear beginning, middle and end. Ideally stories from cultures who use your MFL. Focus on the idea that good storytelling is problem solving and drama is the obstacles you come across and have to overcome.
- **In groups:** decide how each character knows each other and if their characters are bad or good. They then need to decide on the situation and the problem.
- Ask them to write their story in one sentence. You give them an example.
- Then plan their story more fully based on three scenes in three different locations.

SESSION 3 AND 4

- **Writing the plays.** This may be best to directly onto laptops or tablets. You can instruct students that each person should write their own character dialogue encouraging a more democratic form of creating the scripts.

SESSION 5

- **Rehearsing and Performing** the new plays.

Working across curricula, students could also design posters and even programmes for their plays. A literacy task afterwards would be all students writing reviews in the MFL of each other's plays.

Keep the plays short and simple and feel free to amend any of this plan to suit your own style. It is set up so they can do this sitting at desks, but sometimes you may want the groups to stand up to act out sections of their plays.



The following questionnaire can be used during this scheme to **CREATE A DRAMATIC CHARACTER**:

Character's Name: _____

My family structure is: _____

My friends are: _____

I live in: _____

I work: _____

My age is _____ I was born on _____

My Primary School was _____

My Secondary School was _____

The first music I remember listening to and liking was _____

Now I mostly listen to _____

My earliest memory is: _____

My first kiss was: _____

My perfect evening is: _____

People say my handwriting is: _____

My greatest fear is: _____

My favourites: Colour _____

Food _____

Type of holiday _____

This is for you to create a statement specifically for your character:

My _____ is: _____



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