

This is my preparation for a Drama workshop at NGO Connect/Ado Sah Rom, Bucharest, Romania, 2015

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[The basis workshop structure can be potentially used with any multilingual group and is suitable for a workshop of 1.5 to 3 hours length and for group sizes of at least 6 (the more the better!)]

Aim: celebrate and reflect on the languages and experiences that everyone carries with them.

(Sharing 'ourselves'/sharing important places/ sharing important songs)

Objective: Three short scenes at the end (10-15 min) which can be shared over dinner

I. Scene: Learning names and showing/sharing activities that are important to us

Warm up muscles: Multilingual workout (I start instructions in German, other languages take over)

(name+activity; greeting+gesture)

- Group stands in a circle. Each participant introduces their favourite activity (something important to me) as a 'gesture' and then says their name. The group responds with the name and activity. Gestures can be sent around the circle.
- Sending multilingual greetings (+gesture) around the circle (e.g. Guten Tag + handshake). Greetings can be sent around the circle.

Give an example of this exercise/ demonstrate first:

(first rehearsal of final scene)

- Group walks through the room quickly (with music, but optional) exchanging multilingual greetings, lively (image of bustling city/marketplace). There are three chairs placed throughout the room. When a person stands on the chair and stamps their foot for attention, everybody freezes and turns towards the chair. Person on the chair says their name and shows favourite activity, the group repeats name and activity slowly carefully. Everybody should be on the chair at least once (focus on the individual breaking the 'bustle').

II. Scene: Showing/sharing places that are important to us

(Learning about significant places/people in our lives)

Teach how to build a tableaux/demonstrate first:

I give an example on how to build a picture tableaux. I build a place that is important in my life (e.g. sitting on the sofa watching TV with my partner). After I have moulded everybody (up to four people) into my 'place', I wait a moment for the audience to enjoy the picture. Then I walk around my tableaux, introducing every element of the picture in German, explaining why this 'place' is important to me .

(Optional bit)

At the end I mould myself into the picture.

The actor who represented me in the picture leaves. Wait for the audience to take in the picture, say the tableaux title in a choir (e.g. sofa sanctuary), then leave. (note: my actors need to know my tableaux title beforehand)

- (Build a tableaux/In groups of five (max.)):
Each group member thinks of a place that plays an important role in their lives. Mould your four group members into this place/people. Also try to express your feelings towards the place/people through the picture. Wait a moment so the audience can see your picture, then narrate (in your language) what you have presented us here and how you feel about the picture. [Don't worry if not everybody can understand what you are saying, the important thing here is that you express yourself in a language you love]. Mould yourself into the picture at the end.

(second rehearsal of final scene)

Group walks through the room quickly (with music, but optional) exchanging multilingual greetings, lively (image of bustling city/marketplace). There are three chairs placed throughout the room. When a person stands on the chair and stamps their foot for attention, everybody freezes and turns towards the chair. Person on the chair says the name of a place and a tableaux is spontaneously built. A short multilingual narration of the tableaux follows.

III. Scene: Words, songs, poems that are meaningful to us

Warm-up: (Whisper) [optional]

In pairs: Sing to each other your favourite song (e.g. lullaby) in a language of your choice. One listener and one whisperer. Spread across the room (chairs are still present as 'playful' obstacles). The whisperer gently sings their song and their listener (with eyes closed) tries to find their partner through sound.

(Learning a song in a foreign language)

In fours/fives: Choose one song in the group (in a language least spoken in the group).

Teacher and pupils. The teacher teaches her song to the group in her language. Accuracy doesn't matter but enthusiasm :) [Playful ratings can be given for enthusiasm later]

(third rehearsal of final scene)

Group walks through the room quickly (with music, but optional) exchanging multilingual greetings, lively (image of bustling city/marketplace). There are three chairs placed throughout the room. When a person stands on the chair and stamps their foot for attention, everybody freezes and turns towards the chair. Person on the chair starts to sing. The group joins into song (dance), rest of group stands frozen.

IV. Rehearsal time

The following scene is rehearsed (a combination of all three previous rehearsals).

A bustling city, people are walking about exchanging multilingual greetings, other are quietly singing and listening (with eyes closed in the crowd). The audience should be included in the exchange of greetings and gestures. There are several chairs in the middle of the marketplace.

a. Sometimes people step up on the chair, stamp their foot to get attention. Everybody freezes and turns towards the chair. The person on the chair says their name slowly and shows their gesture. Everybody repeats name and gesture slowly. The audience can be included in this.

b. Sometimes people step on the chair, stamp their foot and start singing. Everybody freezes, one group sings the song.

c. Sometimes somebody steps on the chair, stamps their foot for attention, then announces a place important in their lives. Everybody freezes, except the group who is building the statue. The person on the chair narrates the tableaux in their language.

Finishing moment: Chairs are moved together and everybody tries to get on them (all need to help and cooperate): Each participant says 'Welcome to (place of workshop)' in their language - final welcome can be done in English. (The end).

Reflection points: How did it feel to be in the tableaux/to mould the tableaux? Were there similar images? How did it feel not to understand the narration?
