Introduction ERASMUS PLUS KA 2

**Details on the participant**

My name is Elvira Casillo an English teacher from IIS Eliano-Luzzatti- Via Pedemontana, snc Palestrina-Rome-Italy.

Last September I joined in an English Drama course in Southampton. A special thank goes to Mrs. Corvino Daniela, Project co-ordinator of Erasmus Ka 2, for this beautiful and particularly interesting experience.

The choice of this particular formation course was due to my long-lasting and strong interest in Drama, and its related activities, to be employed in school curricula.

I’ve been attending Drama courses and laboratories for 15 years now and in recent years, as a secondary school, we have organized projects which implied Drama laboratories in our extra-curricular projects. This kind of activity has received more and more approval and participation from the students and the direct experience of performing on stage has been so rewarding and stimulating that we have finally included the Drama projects, both “I Mestieri dello Spettacolo” and “Performing your English” in the area of Alternanza scuola-lavoro, since last year.

In order to strengthen up my formation and competences in this area and to prove that teaching Drama at school could be a positive and effective strategy to maintain students’ interest and motivation in studying different subjects but most of all English, which is the subject I teach, and which is the most susceptible to undergo continuous changing and adaptation to meet the new generations’ requests, I went to Southampton- UK

The Organization that offered what I was looking for was the International Study Programmes. I was attracted by the name of the course “**Teaching Drama in Secondary Schools**” and the programme of the mobility period in Southampton- from September 24th to October 1st 2017.

**Detailed programme of the mobility period:**

* Drama in the secondary classroom- Practical workshops with emphasis on active participation. A variety of techniques introduced to provide teachers with various methodologies for teaching drama and theatre studies. Process drama and Verbatim Theatre included to help pupils to gain self-confidence, speech flow and concentration. Use of improvisation and playback theatre to encourage self-expression, creativity, problem solving and other thinking skills.
* Workshop: Drama activity for Teaching English as a Foreign language: Motivating pupils through a variety of activities which engage their imaginations and creativity- innovative role play and drama activities, use of the media, poetry and stories.
* Theatre studies: workshop on innovative ideas for teaching the works of major European playwrights, using Shakespeare’s theatre as an example.
* Attend a Shakespeare play at Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre in London and visit London
* Workshop on drama activities for school pupils held by Nuffield Theatre director.
* Attendance to a performance at Mayflower theatre: “Beautiful” Carol King.
* Lecture and discussion on the teaching od Drama in British schools.
* 2 days visits to secondary schools. Observe lessons including drama/theatre studies and discussion with staff.
* Observation of Youth Theatre workshops/rehearsals/performances.
* Opportunity to exchange experiences with participants from other countries.
* Cultural Visit: Winchester

*Primo set di foto: Programma- Workshop- Visita alle scuole. Visita guidata Southampton, Winchester.*

**Competences acquired:**

Definitely my teaching experience has been enriched by the new techniques for teaching drama and theatre studies applied to the ordinary curricula and classroom teaching strategies.

Some creative activities have been used during this school year mainly in the first and second year classes and the response has been enthusiastic and involving.

Once given some tasks to the students, according to a set of suggested situations and themes, the students, organized in groups, have produced a series of activities based on role-play, improvisation, use of technology, memorization, dance, choreography, acting.

This material can be shared with other colleagues and the purpose is to disseminate the results of the mobility project as widely as possible.

**Host Organization:**

The organization has provided practical support, accommodation in family which has fostered understanding of the culture and mentality of the host country.

The tutor has offered professional support to all participants coming from many different European countries and I was the only Italian, so my full immersion with the language has been very useful and refreshing.

**Visits to places and schools:**

* Walking tour of historic Southampton
* Day visit to Cantell secondary school
* Day visit to London- Attend Shakespeare’s “King Lear” al the Globe
* Day visit to Bitterne Park School
* Day visit to Winchester

**Tuition Centre: The Third Age Centre- 11 Cranbury Terrace- Southampton (UK)**

Weekly programme: 25th September

1. Welcome and introduction with local organizer Ela Wisniewska
2. Walking tour of historic Southampton
3. Workshop on Teaching Shakespeare and introduction to the Shakespeare play at the Globe Theatre – King Lear. Eileen Fitzgerald, University of Winchester.

26th September

1. Day visit to a secondary school: Cantell Comprehensive School

Observe lessons including drama/art and theatre studies and discussion with staff.

1. Pub evening at Duke of Wellington

27th September

1. Drama workshop with Sam Miller- Youth theatre director, Nuffield Theatre Southampton
2. Mayflower theatre: Musical “Beautiful” Carol King

28th September

1. Day visit to London- Tate Modern, Globe Theatre: King Lear

29th September

1. Day visit to a secondary school: Bitterne Park School, Southampton

30th September

1. Day visit to Winchester: Guided tour

**3. Workshop on Shakespeare- Aims for this session: “King Lear”**

* Prepare students
* accustom your class to Shakespearean drama
* discover political context in Shakespeare’s lifetime
* deepen layers of significance in the play
* give some sense of ownership of the text

KING LEAR – Things you should never do when you are king – or just old-

* Divide a unite kingdom: Gloucester refers to the recent division of the kingdom at the beginning of the Quarto version of the play
* Retire
* Banish your loyal subjects
* Behave in a petulant manner
* Reject your legitimate daughter casting her off without a dowry
* Overrule the laws of inheritance and succession

See Leonard Tennenhouse, 1986

IMAGERY: blindness and madness- (nature takes part with winds blowing)

**4. Visit to Cantell School (Comprehensive, 11-16) - Drama Course on “Commedia Dell’Arte”** - 7th form- 11-years-old students

Students sit on the floor and take clipboards to note down the activities the teacher tells them to do.

They search for information on some papers on the floor and work in group or pair to scribble down some notes on clip boards, they are wearing a uniform and are bare foot.

Class activities: Start to skim and scan the information scattered around the room on handouts and answer the questions:

* What is Commedia dell’Arte and when was it popular?
* Why was it so popular?
* How has it influenced modern theatre and comedy? E.g. Mr. Bean, Clowns, etc.

Students look at a slide on the projector and repeat some Italian words with gestures: “Parli Italiano?” Pizza, Leonardo Da Vinci, Commedia, spaghetti, etc.

Students move around exaggerating movements in imitation of their teacher and repeat words aloud in a circle and then two by two to experience movement.

Slide 2: Pantalone- A stock character, he is old, has got a high social status, he loves money, he’s miser and greedy, protective of his daughter Isabella

Slide 3: Arlecchino- A stock character, the teacher shows the gestures, the walking, the movement associated to a cat, his typical features are: cunningness, hunger, swiftness.

Slide 4: Stage direction on a dialogue (Black writing in brackets)

Mr. Crabs script:

Pantalone: “a lokka to the lefta, a lokka to the righta…ahhh nobody there…(He starts counting money)

Arlecchino: “why are you looking at me like that!!”

Pantalone: “Because…because…I’ve been robbed…!!” etc.

While the students practice in groups (3 minutes) the teacher monitors, when she says stop, she holds her arm up and everybody stops and is silent and sits down again. When she says “up we go for me now” a couple stands up and preforms in front of the others who are supposed to pay attention and give opinions and judgements, they swop then again, shut up and have a few minutes reflection and comment on what is ok and what has to be improved.

9:30 Drama course – 11th form- 14- years old (15/16 years old prepare a script for the exam in October and had the text in July).

* Rehearsal schedule
* Timetable preparing for the exam
* Group objectives
* Montage
* Car wash on computer
* Groups of 2/4 with a stage director and props
* Target to focus upon, midway target and filling up a form with a personal target (did you achieve the target?)

What do you need to do to reach/achieve the target next week to upgrade?

You must justify everything you do or you have done

At the end of the lesson everybody is silent and takes off the props and put them in a transparent box or plastic bags, they reorder the room and take away the tables which have removable legs. (Add videos and pictures)

11:00 - Class 7 same lesson on Commedia dell’Arte, different teaching techniques and different

approach to behavior. A student is sent to baddy classroom because overexcited.

Ways of improving: some suggestions are given on a paper and others have to evaluate and say or suggest some improvements about:

VOICE-PITCH-VOLUME-GESTURES-ACCENT

12:00 – Class 8 Drama Course- Lesson on “The Woman in Black” by Susan Hill

Slide 1: Literacy objective- lights- camera- Action

Focus on the character of Kipps discussing on the following points:

* How do we show Kipps’ state of mind and how it affects the scene?
* What am I looking for?
* How to create tension and atmosphere when telling a story?
* How do we build tension in the scene and show Kipps’ state of mind?

Create a scene where Kipps reveals his experience of the Woman in Black to the other characters in the pub. Use the skills and knowledge from previous lessons to create atmosphere, tension and suspense, consider the following:

* How does Kipps enter the pub?
* How do the other people inside respond to him?
* What prompts Kipps to tell his story?
* What happens in the scene before Kipps reveals what happened to him?
* The audience can’t be distracted by a drunkyard, so, when Kipps enters, how do they react?
* What music and sound would you choose? (Sound technician use PC)

You tube video from which the students take ideas to reproduce noises, sounds, wind howling, tone of voice so that you feel hooked in also by the use of adjectives and effects of sound. The pace of speech is really slow and puts emphasis on certain words. (students perform the scene using props like hats, robes, mantels, bottles, tables, lanterns, glasses and work in groups).

At the end of the activity the teacher gives consignement for next lesson to perform and finish script, (they write their own scene).

**6- Workshop with Sam Miller**

Introduction and background- Coach director of theatre and methodology- Nuffield Theatre

Activity:

* Exercises on Breathing in different timing seconds
* Breathing without and with emission of sound
* Mimic expression of face
* Walking in the room at different speed and projection of voice with consonant sound (pa-ga-da-ga)
* Voice projection
* Mouth movement, stage craft
* Deceive, building confidence
* Devising and bridging, small bits of action to be put together to create a story, encouraging and applauding.
* Useful tools for job interviews, mental disorders, life savers for autism, Asperg syndrome but in these case you must approach differently as they are more sensitive
* Group work on the theme of REVENGE (Pictures and videos)
* Group activity: Starting from the center- clear the area- center- fallen- favorite place- hug next/close to person
* More activities: improvisation-freeze- substitution and change scene and dialogue- always look for a conflict- touch one couple and take exactly his/her position
* In circle you act first others imitate or change
* Create your situation
* Overlap all together

Working with Texts

Stanislawsky (some biography before and after workshop is teacher’s time)

Naturalistic- realistic-less dramatic-more role play

Physical Theatre: Samurai Game (in circle groups of 3, 1 in the middle 2 on the side and shout and blow, one by one is eliminated until just two are left in the end. They stay back to back and walk at any single word of a story told by the coach, when they hear the word Samurai, they must turn and blow. The quickest wins. Objectives of any game are: Concentration, focus, tension, memory and a lot of fun!

See also “Frantic Assembly Book”

Bella Marlin- Stanislawsky-Gemac.

**9. Day Visit to Bitterne Park School**

Drama Course- 8th form – 12 years old students

3 weeks school year

Call the roll: Yes Sir!

Mime Work: first highlight the words Clarity and Communication

Class Discussion: What does suspension of disbelief mean?

What must you do to make mime successful?

e.g.: if you put something down don’t walk through it!

Your expression must show exactly what you are thinking or feeling

Your body language must be clear

You must always consider what your audience can see, the audience know it’s not real.

Activity: The students work in pairs on a bench

They find a work place in the room, select, choose roles among them, develop a preparation and a presentation in 5 minutes.

They have 60 seconds to find gestures and face expression

Performance in front of the class

Two groups come together and show each other’s piece

Focus and work in silence for few minutes talking and performing

In the end the students wave if they have changed and improved the piece of Drama after showing to others- peers feedback-

Drama Course- 9th form - 14/15 years old

5-6 Tasks as they work more quickly. Group of 4

Scenario: You are Bouncers outside a club. It’s late, it’s dark and cold but you are a tough guy/girl. Create 3 still images of your Bouncers outside the club.

Levels of evaluation: Good (posture-gesture- facial expression)

Better (some of the above plus levels of space)

The best (use all of the above)

Devicing: still working within limits, slow motion, frantic scene repeated.

On the basis of this experience I wanted to experiment a play room for our students and had presented a project to create a special classroom where the students could be free to express their creativity and imagination using active English at the same time. The project has remained confined into the classroom walls and I try to apply this methodology from time to time as a strategy to break with the usual routine lesson and to add up new ideas to the planned syllabus.

My students enjoy doing these group works but the structures and the position of classrooms are not enhancing this creative but, of course, noisy expression of individual skills.