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Drama Education for Czech English Teachers in the 1990s

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Prohlášení

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Drama Education for Czech English Teachers in the 1990s

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Praha, dne

.....

Leah N. Gaffen, podpis

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Abstract

This thesis provides a historical overview of drama programs for English language teachers in the 1990s in the Czech Republic. It focuses on two projects: the Class Acts Teacher Network and the ELT Drama Network. The Class Acts Teacher Network (1996-1998) trained teachers to create English plays for an annual festival. The second project, the ELT Drama Network (later known as EDEN) was developed in partnership with the British Council from 1999-2003. It focused on using drama as a teaching method in the English language classroom. The thesis includes case studies of participants, showing how the drama training affected them professionally and personally. The final part of the thesis outlines several English drama projects that took place at Charles University in Prague and West Bohemia University in Plzen in the 1990s.

Tato práce podává historický přehled dramatických programů pro učitele anglického jazyka v 90. letech 20. století v České republice. Zaměřuje se na dva projekty: Class Acts Teacher Network a ELT Drama Network. Projekt Class Acts Teacher Network (1996-1998) připravoval učitele na tvorbu anglických divadelních her pro každoroční festival. Druhý projekt, The ELT Drama Network (později známý jako EDEN), vznikl ve spolupráci s British Council v letech 1999-2003. Zaměřoval se na drama jako vyučovací metodu v hodinách anglického jazyka. Práce obsahuje případové studie účastníků, které ukazují, jak je dramatická výuka ovlivnila po profesní i osobní stránce. V závěrečné části práce je nastíněno několik projektů anglického dramatu, které se uskutečnily na Univerzitě Karlově v Praze a na Západočeské univerzitě v Plzni v 90. letech 20. století.

Key words:

English language teaching (ELT), British Council, Open Society Fund, 1990s, drama education, Czech Republic, Slovak drama SIG

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List of Abbreviations

- ATECR - Association of Teachers of English in the Czech Republic
- ELT - English Language Teaching
- BC - British Council
- DAMU - Prague Academy of Performing Arts
- EDEN- English Drama Education Network
- GNA - Gymnázium Nad Alejí
- JAMU - Janáček Academy of Performing Arts (Brno)
- OSF - Open Society Fund
- MŠMT - Ministry of Education

Notes about English translations of Czech educational institutions:

- For Czech universities, I have used the official English translations.
- For primary and secondary schools, I have used the Czech names of the schools.
 - Gymázium: High schools with a university track
 - ZŠ: *základní škola*- primary schools
 - compulsory education, grades 1-9
 - ZUŠ: *základní umělecké školy* - primary arts schools
 - Schools offering extracurricular arts programs. These are run by the local municipalities and part of the public school system. Their curriculum is overseen by the Ministry of Education
 - Karlínské Spektrum: *Dům dětí a mládeže hlavního města Prahy - Karlínské Spektrum*
 - Community center with a wide range of children's activities.
- For other organizations and institutions, I will use the official English translations of their titles when available.

Introduction

“Let our main object be as follows: to seek and to find a method of instruction, by which teachers may teach less, but learners learn more; by which schools may be the scene of less noise, aversion, and useless labour, but of more leisure, enjoyment and solid progress.”

- Jan Amos Komenský, The Great Didactic¹

I came to Prague in 1992 to teach English, joining a rush of foreigners intrigued by the country that had elected a playwright as a president. My background was in educational theatre. I had been a member of the Yale Children’s Theatre in college and had worked for a year at the Kennedy Center of the Performing Arts in Washington DC. I was planning to take a break from theatre and teach English in Prague.

Like so many of my peers, I quickly got a job teaching at a language school. Most of the students in my class were recent high school graduates who hadn’t gone to university. They were friendly, a close-knit group, intelligent but a bit lazy. Planning lessons was difficult and lonely for me. I felt an inherent distance from my students when I took on the role of a teacher with the power to decide what grade I would give them. We were reading a simplified version of *Tom Sawyer*, and I decided to fall back on my children’s theatre tricks and put on simple plays. My mother sent me one of my old children’s theatre scripts from America, (it wasn’t easy to find English materials in the days before the internet), and I simplified the English and added jokes to make the shows more relevant to their age group. We decided on a date for our premiere, invited the other English classes, and the pressure was on! Suddenly, I started to enjoy planning lessons. I was a member of an ensemble, not a teacher preaching from above, and we were creating a show together. The atmosphere changed completely. Students started learning vocabulary (i.e. their lines) so they wouldn’t let down their classmates, and “homework” consisted of making scenery, helping each other memorize lines, writing songs, finding costumes.... And our “final exam” was a show!

I had grown up doing school plays, and it was very natural to bring theatre into my English classroom. I was surprised to learn that this was the first experience onstage for all of my students; that in the country where Vaclav Havel was president, theatre was not part of the school curriculum. I realized that there was a gap in Czech education when it came to drama. The opportunity to perform in a play was not part of a typical Czech child’s school experience - neither in English nor in their mother tongue.

This realization led to a project that lasted over ten years. Step by step I developed drama projects in more and more environments. I wanted to help Czech schools adopt the ‘school as play’ ideas of Komenský- a Czech philosopher whom everyone could quote, but who was rarely emulated at the time.

¹ <https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/comenius-archives-great-didactic>

In 1993 I set up an English drama program at Gymnázium Nad Alejí, the only public school in Prague with a bilingual program that taught subjects in English and Czech.² We worked in classroom 105 which had been transformed into a small theatre by an enthusiastic group of students. (The classroom was also the inspiration for the name of the now famous Vosto5 company, which was founded by graduates of my drama group. I produced short plays with all of my drama classes. But what I enjoyed more was organizing after-school productions open to all interested students.

I was surprised that there were so few extracurricular activities at schools. Later I learned about the *základní umělecké školy, ZUŠ* (primary arts schools)³. These schools had specialized arts programs for students and required a year-long commitment. They provided intensive, high quality drama education, but they did not allow the students to “stumble into” theatre by joining a club at their regular school. This was very different from my experience in my American public schools, where I had had many opportunities to try out all kinds of activities, from sports to band to Latin club to theatre.

In 1994, I wrote a grant to the Open Society Fund (OSF) to develop after-school theatre programs at Czech high schools. I called my project 'Class Acts', which means something that is really great, but also evokes the ideas of both acting and school.

After the first year of the project, I decided to recruit other teachers to do shows, as this would give more students the chance to experience the thrill of performance. I offered teachers training and support. Over the next seven years, the programme grew with support from OSF, the British Council (BC), Masaryk University, ARTAMA and other institutions.

As I worked with teachers, I realized two things: first, that drama was a highly effective method of teaching students to speak English with confidence, to learn to communicate rather than getting lost in grammar rules. Secondly, I discovered that almost all the Czech ELT teachers I met were intimidated by drama. Additionally, school management was often very unsupportive of non-traditional methods, especially when used by Czech English teachers (much more leeway was given to native speakers who taught English in schools).

This thesis is an attempt to give an overview of the drama education training programs that I organized for Czech English teachers in the 1990s. How did Czech English teachers get involved in drama projects? What activities did we organize? Which were most effective? How did they influence teachers' professional development?

² For three years (1994-6) The school ran an International Baccalaureate (IB) program for students in their final two years of high school. To graduate, these students had to pass IB exams as well as the Czech maturita (state final exam). The program was discontinued in 1996 for financial reasons, and to this day, there is no public school offering an IB program in the Czech Republic.

³ Primary Arts Schools are a unique Czech system of arts schools that offer after-school arts programs for children 6-15 years old. . They are part of the public school system and are run by the local municipality with curricula based on guidelines of the Ministry of Education.

I have *not* written about how drama can be used to improve learners' English grammar and vocabulary, as much has been written about this - some of it by the very educators who encountered drama in my own projects. I outline the projects we organized and how they developed over the years. I discuss which drama techniques were the most effective in the English language teaching (ELT) classroom. Perhaps most importantly, I explore what students and teachers gained beyond language acquisition, and how the foreign language classroom can be an ideal place to introduce students to drama.

In the **first chapter**, I present a timeline that gives an overview of the activities I organized from 1990-2003. I have chosen the latter date because it marks the end of British Council funding and the end of the most significant projects. I describe our main partner institutions and how we were funded.

In the **second chapter**, I focus on my drama work with students, as it laid the foundations for my later work with teachers.

The **third chapter** is about my first teacher training project with teachers, the Class Acts Teacher Network, which culminated in the annual Class Acts Theatre Festival.

The **fourth chapter** is about the ELT Drama Network, an in-depth training program supported and shaped by the British Council and also influenced by English drama activities in Slovakia.

The **fifth chapter** is based on recent interviews with teachers who participated in my programs, showing how their encounter with drama influenced their professional development and career choices.

Finally, **chapter six** outlines some of the drama programs run by other teachers from the USA and UK who taught at Czech universities in the 1990s. While this chapter does not provide a comprehensive analysis of all English drama projects at all Czech universities, it shows the impact of a few.

Chapter 1: Overview

1.1. Timeline

1.1.1 Before Prague

1988-91	Member of the Yale Children's Theatre (student organization), <i>New Haven, Connecticut</i>
1991-1992	Worked in the Education Department of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, <i>Washington DC</i>
1991-1992	Drama Teacher, Bethesda Academy of Performing Arts, <i>Maryland</i> , + Sunnyvale Youth Theatre, <i>California</i>
September 92	Came to Prague, started working at Polyglot Language School

1.1.2. Work with students: 1993-2004

March 1993	Production of scenes from Tom Sawyer and Canterbury Tales - <i>Polyglot Language School, Prague</i>
July 1993	Midsummer Madness - scenes in English with 25 students (aged 12-40) - <i>Masaryk Summer Language Program, Charter 77 Foundation, Prague</i>
1993- 1994	Set up English drama program at Gymnázium Nad Alejí (GNA) Taught English Drama to eight classes, compulsory class - <i>Bilingual Program, Gymnázium Nad Alejí (GNA), Prague</i>
Dec 1993	A Christmas Carol - after-school production at GNA
April 1994	Arsenic and Old Lace - after-school production at GNA
August, 1994	Holiday outside Prague - compilation of scenes in English with 25 students (aged 12-40) - <i>Masaryk Summer Language Program, Charter 77 Foundation</i>
Fall 1994	Little Shop of Horrors - after-school musical with students from GNA; performed at Celetna Theatre, Gymnázium Jana Neruda, Divadlo Barka in Brno, Sladkovského gymnázium.
Winter 1995	Can You Hear Me At All? - after-school production with students from <i>Akademické gymnázium Brno, performed at Divadlo Barka (Brno) and</i>

	<i>Divadlo hudby (Olomouc) and Class Acts (CA) festival</i>
Spring 1995	Ernestine's Amazing Imagination - after-school production with students of Sladkovského Gymnázium Praha, performed at school and CA festival
Dec 1995-March 1996	Some Like it Hot - after-school production with students from <i>GNA and Gymnázium Sladkovského</i> , performed at <i>Divadlo v Celetné, Divadlo Barka (Brno)</i> in cooperation with <i>Misery Loves Company English Theatre Company</i>
May 1996	Black Comedy - after-school production with students from <i>GNA</i> , performed at <i>Divadlo v Reznické</i>
December 1996	Class Acts Revue - theatre showcase for students who had participated in CA programs (<i>Divadlo Rubín, Prague</i>)
Fall, 1996	My students founded Vosto5 (named after classroom 105 at GNA), started performing in Czech
2003-2004	Founded <i>Divadlo bez slovníku</i> , created devised shows with teenagers in <i>Roztoky u Prahy</i> . They performed <i>Apples/Journeys</i> at the Czech regional festival <i>Nahlížení</i> in 2004.

Note 1: After 1996 I ran more student activities, including summer camps coordinated with the community center *Karlinské Spektrum* and other after-school productions, but I will not include them in this thesis as they did not directly affect the work with teachers.

Note 2: We worked closely with the professional English language theatre company *Misery Loves Company* in the 1990s which was based at *Divadlo v Celetné*. They hosted our performances, festivals and taught workshops for children at festivals. Some of my students performed in their professional shows.

1.1.3. Class Acts Festivals: 1995-1998

April, 1995	First Annual Class Acts Theatre Festival <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Showcase of 8 performances from five schools in Prague, Brno and Olomouc. - 100 students, 5 teachers - <i>Divadlo Komédie</i>
May 1996	Second Annual Class Acts Theatre Festival, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Showcase of 9 performances from 6 towns in the Czech Republic - Directed by teachers from the Class Acts training program - <i>Divadlo Komédie</i>
May 1997	Third Annual Class Acts Theatre Festival <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two-day showcase of performances in English and Czech - From 20 secondary schools, primary schools and kindergartens

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 230 students, 19 teachers - Directed by teachers in Class Acts training program - Divadlo U Hasičů - Workshop by John Heckel
June 1997	South Moravia English Theatre Festival <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Showcase of English theatre from region - 8 shows by 5 schools (3 from the Class Acts Festival) - Organized by Ann Marie Schultz, member of CA Teacher network
May 1998	Fourth Annual Class Acts Theatre Festival <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Three-day showcase of performances in English - From 100 secondary schools, primary schools and kindergartens from 8 Czech towns - 100 students, 11 teachers - Directed by teachers in Class Acts training program - Karlínské Spektrum, DDM - 5 workshops led by native speakers of English - Inspirational Performance by VOSTO5
June 1998	Regional Festivals: South Moravia English Theatre Festival
June 1998	Regional Festivals: South Moravia English Theatre Festival, West Bohemia English Theatre Festival, Karlovy Vary Theatre Festival

Note: There is a list of all participating schools and the productions they brought to the Class Acts Festivals in Appendix 2.

1.1.4. Class Acts Teacher Network: 1995-1998

Short and long-term teacher training focused on producing plays

1.1.4.1 Short-term workshops

May 1995	British Council, Prague British Council, Olomouc Masaryk University, Brno
August 1995	Peace Corps, Czech Republic (Anne Marie Schulz)
Fall 1995	Conference of the Association of English Teachers in the Czech Republic, Prague Pedagogical Center, Prague British Council, Prague British Council, Brno British Council, Olomouc British Council, Ostrava British Council, Pardubice British Council, Ústí nad Labem

	Conference of the Association of English Teachers in the Czech Republic, Liberec British Council, České Budějovice
August 1996	Peace Corps, Czech Republic

Note: These were one-off workshops that usually lasted 90-120 minutes long designed to recruit members for the long-term training project. They also aimed to introduce English teachers to drama activities and show them how to create short skits in English, and were called *So you want to produce a play with your students?*

1.1.4.2. Long-term teacher training projects

January-April 1996	Class Acts Teacher Network: intensive training program for 15 selected teachers, culminating in the Class Acts Theatre Festival June 1996 - Creation of a collection of scripts and drama books for teachers at the British Council Resource Centre in Prague.
January -June 1997	Class Acts Teacher Network: intensive training program for 35 teachers, culminating in Class Acts Theatre Festival + Regional Festival
June 1997	Planning/Networking meeting for CA at the Center of Drama Education (<i>Centrum tvořivé dramatiky</i> with drama leaders from ARTA?A
Fall, 1997	John Heckel (Humboldt State University, California) led a directing workshop for Class Acts Network teachers called <i>American in the '90s: A Modern Babylon?</i>
January - June 1998	Class Acts Teacher Network: intensive training program for 35 teachers, culminating in the Class Acts Theatre Festival + 3 regional festivals

1.1.5. ELT Drama Network (later called EDEN): 1998-2003

Long-term teacher training focused on drama in the classroom

Spring 1998	One-off drama workshops held at all BC Resource centers to generate interest in Drama Summer School.
July 1998 + July 1999	Summer School: <i>Class Acts: Drama Education in the English Classroom</i> - one-week summer drama course for 20 teachers at Šlapanice u Brna organized by Masaryk University and funded by the British Council. Taught by: Leah Gaffen, Joanne Beckett, Kate Spike, Michaela Nováčková, Jana Procházková, Blanka Dryková (1998); Eva Kučerová Sikorová, Klara Sandorová, Níka Štěpánková, Barbara Lucká, Silvia El Helo (1999).

July 1999	Slovak International Summer School - taught by University of Exeter drama professors (Geoff Fox and Stephen Cockett). <i>Participants from Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Latvia, and Lithuania.</i> Funded by the Slovak British Council. Czech participants: Leah Gaffen (assistant teacher), Jarka Frycová, Eva Kučerová- Sikorová
September, 1999	First Drama Day at International Conference, <i>Moravian-Silesian Association of Teachers of English</i>
October 1999 - April 2000	ELT and Drama - six-month foundation course coordinated with British Council. 25 participants. Met for 5 weekends for drama training. Produced <i>Dramalogue</i> , a handbook of 26 drama lesson plans, at the end of the project. Location: Masaryk University (Šlapanice u Brna)
May, 2000 - August 2001	ELT Drama Network - continuation of <i>ELT and Drama</i> . Additional participants joined the group (37 participants in total). Location: Masaryk University (Šlapanice u Brna) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - June 2000 Planning meeting for the <i>ELT Drama Network</i> led by the British Council with representatives from various organizations: Jaroslav Provazník from ARTAMA, Conrad Toft from the Slovak Drama SIG, and Peter Whiley from the Polish drama organization MAD. - July 2000 One-week intensive summer school for <i>ELT Drama Network</i> led by drama experts Geoff Fox and Stephen Cockett from the University of Exeter. - October 2000 - April 2001: Five weekend training sessions, included drama input and management training. Participants completed independent drama projects. Funded by the British Council - Fall 2000- British Council announced plans to cease all cultural and educational projects in the Czech Republic. End date of the ELT network was brought forward two years to August 2001. (August 2001) - September 2000 - June 2002 - 12 Drama Days for teachers and children throughout the country. Organized and run by members of EDEN and the Slovak Drama SIG in Pacov, Jablonec nad Nisou, Silesian University, Pilsen, Olomouc, Hradec Králové. Financed by local schools and publishers. - January 2001 - Founding of EDEN (<i>English Drama Education Network</i>) as part of the Association of English Teachers of the Czech Republic.

	- August 2001 - Final weekend session of EDEN (earlier called ELT Drama Network) which was financed by British Council.
October 2001	International Meeting on ELT and Drama in Nitra, Slovakia, <i>Dedicated to Drama</i> , organized by the Slovak Drama SIG.
November 2001	EDEN (ELT Drama Network) event: Weekend drama training led by Roman Černík (Faculty of Education, West Bohemia University, Plzeň)
April 2002	EDEN (ELT Drama Network) Conference - " <i>Entering the Garden of Eden</i> " at JAMU with 9 speakers from the Czech Republic, Austria, Slovakia. Supported by BC and publishers (OUP, CUP, Fraus) and Janáček Theatre Academy (JAMU). Accredited by the Ministry of Education (MŠMT).
April 2003	EDEN (ELT Drama Network) Conference - <i>Crossing Borders</i> . A 2-day international conference at JAMU with 11 presenters from CR, Austria, Slovakia, Ireland, USA, Sponsored by JAMU, BC, US Embassy, publishers, Accredited by MŠMT.
2003-2004	Multicultural Education Project with EDEN, People in Need Foundation, supported by British Council.

1.2. Partner organizations

Immediately after the Velvet Revolution, there was a huge demand for English teachers in Czechoslovakia. Virtually overnight, Russian teachers were appointed to teach English - whether or not they actually spoke the language. Eager 20-year-olds from the UK and North America, who had heard that Prague was the Paris of the 90s, flocked to the city and got jobs as sought-after native speakers. NGOs organized English teaching programs and Western embassies set up projects to help the Czechs nurture their new democracy. There was a great effort to promote civil society through language instruction and cultural programs. I worked with many of these organizations. Below is a description of the ones I worked with most closely and which were arguably the most significant.

1.2.1. The British Council

The British Council (BC) is the cultural and educational organization of the United Kingdom, funded by the British government. It played a major role in the development of English language education in the Czech Republic in the 1990s. It was the leader of ELT teacher training in the 1990s (and also had generous funding for cultural programs). The BC had a strong presence throughout the country thanks to their numerous events, publications, grants and outreach projects.

The BC had an office in the center of Prague on Národní třída, welcoming passers-by to admire their window gallery of contemporary British and Czech artists, and also providing a large foyer where the public could sit, read English newspapers and meet. Downstairs there was a library (also open to the public) with British literature, non-fiction and an excellent collection of English teaching books. Every week they offered free teacher training workshops on a wide range of subjects - British studies, literature, new teacher training methods, technology, films... these were attended by school teachers, academics, students, or just people who wanted to listen to the English language. The BC had a large staff, including an active cultural department headed by Milada Nováková and an education department headed by Malcolm Griffiths and assisted by Staša Závíková. The BC also offered private English language courses (now the main activity of the BC).

In addition to the Prague office, the BC had a presence in every major Czech town with a network of regional resource centers. All were open to the public and centrally located in the 7 regional capitals: Brno, Olomouc, Ostrava, České Budějovice, Plzeň, Pardubice, and Ústí nad Labem. The director of each resource center coordinated regular teacher training workshops, taught by teacher trainers, university lecturers, translators and local native English speakers.

An important long-term project of the BC was their program to train Czech teacher trainers. The BC selected about 80 teachers from universities, primary and secondary schools. The organization invested a lot in these people, guiding and mentoring them over a number of years. And rightly so –this was a very talented group of educators, many of whom have gone on to shape English language teaching at all levels. These trainers were trained in the UK and the Czech Republic, and most worked with the BC for several years, organizing conferences,

courses, summer programs, running university departments, and much more). Many of the people in this program also participated in the ELT Drama Network (described in Chapter 4).

The British Council Prague published *Perspectives*, a journal of English language teaching and British Studies. They printed articles by international experts as well as locals, focusing on themes relevant to educators in Central and Eastern Europe. They also published a local newsletter.

1.2.2. US Embassy (United States Information Service)

Compared to the British Council, the US government played a much smaller role in education and culture in the Czech Republic in the 1990s, focusing more on the political sphere. Its programs were organized through the United States Information Service (USIS).

The embassy had a library that was one of the best resources for English-language books and literature, including many classic plays, at a time before anything was available online. It was first located in the embassy and later in the American Center on Hybernská Street.

They also organized some one-off workshops for English teachers and provided funding for “celebrity” teacher trainers to come from the USA for conferences. The most important for our drama project was Carolyn Graham, known for her series of “Jazz Chants” textbooks. These books taught aspects of English grammar using rhythmic poetry, and some of them included scripts using jazz rhythms. They were very popular with Czech English teachers because they were fun, easy to introduce into the classroom and often targeted specific grammar topics.

There are also two international programs sponsored by the US government: the Fulbright Commission and the Peace Corps. Several of the teachers who worked with us were associated with these organizations. John Heckel was part of the Fulbright International Exchange – he was a drama professor at Humboldt State University (California) and received a Fulbright grant to spend a year teaching at the Department of Education at Charles University. Anne Marie Schulz was a Peace Corps volunteer who taught at a school in Uherské Hradiště and participated in festivals and our drama projects. Adam Beck, who taught at the West Bohemia University, was also a Peace Corps volunteer (more in the upcoming chapters).

1.2.3. The Open Society Fund (OSF)

OSF is a nonprofit organization founded by the philanthropist George Soros, a Hungarian émigré who made his fortune in currency speculation in the USA. After the Velvet Revolution the organization set up offices in many post-communist countries. Its headquarters were in New York (known as the Open Society Institute). Its aim was to promote civil society, mainly through educational and cultural programs. It was one of the most prestigious and well funded non-profit organizations, with an office on Old Town Square and projects throughout the region.

In the 1990s OSF funded many projects that promoted the learning of English through grants. They supported Class Acts from 1994-97. In the early 2000s, OSF sponsored a drama

workshop in Komárno focused on the Hungarian minority, coordinated by Conrad Toft from the University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra, Slovakia. Many Czech ELT teachers from the BC Šlapanice project participated.

At the end of the 1990s and into the 2000s OSF focused more on minority issues, racism, and multiculturalism.

1.2.4. The Association of English Teachers of the Czech Republic (ATECR)

The ATECR was founded in January 1990 by a group of enthusiastic English teachers who wanted to improve the quality of English teaching and develop cooperation at national and international levels; they held their first conference in February 1991. In 1998, their annual conference in Prague attracted 600 English teachers from the Czech Republic and abroad. They had a widely-distributed newsletter in which I published many articles about drama projects. Later, participants in our projects also published articles about their experiences. In the early 2000s we set up a drama 'special interest group', officially under the umbrella of ATECR, which will be described in more detail in Chapter 4.

1.2.5. Creative Dramatics Association (Sdružení pro tvořivou dramatiku)

The Creative Theatre Association is a nonprofit organization that was founded in February 1990, just a few months after the Velvet Revolution of 1989. It has a network of regional offices. Since the early 1990s, they have organized workshops for teachers, including many led by drama specialists from abroad. They also help organize national children's theatre festivals, publish books, prepare curricula for drama in education, and provide training for drama teachers.

1.2.6. Publishing companies of English Language Teaching (ELT) materials

We also worked with a number of international and Czech publishing companies. They often held workshops to promote their new ELT books to Czech educators. They had a strong presence at conferences, and they often invited textbook authors from the UK and USA to the Czech Republic. These included the aforementioned Carolyn Graham and Ken Wilson, the author of several textbooks that used drama techniques and scripts to teach English.

Several of the publishers sponsored our drama conferences and other events in the early 2000s. Sometimes they provided books for participants, and occasionally they gave us financial support. We were most closely connected to Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press and the Czech company Fraus.

1.2.7. English theatre companies

Misery Loves Company was a professional English language theatre company founded in Prague in 1993 by Canadian Ewan McLaren, American Richard Toth and Czech-American David Nykl. The company was based at the Celetná Theatre (*Divadlo v Celetné*). They helped with the production of a number of my student shows and festivals, and I presented several of

my students' performances at the Celetná Theatre under their umbrella. In 1998, members of the company led drama workshops at Class Acts Festivals.

To this day, the Bear Educational Theatre produces English-language plays to teach the language to school-aged children. It was started in 1996 by David Fisher, who was also a member of the ELT Drama Network. Later, several of our participants worked for the Bear Theatre, developing scripts, acting, directing shows for the company, etc.

1.3. Significant conferences

The ATECR (Association of English Teachers in the Czech Republic) organized regional, national, and international conferences that were attended by hundreds of English teachers. I led workshops and presentations on drama and ELT at many of them from 1995 onwards. One of the biggest conferences took place in Prague in 1998. There were over 600 participants, including many well-known ELT experts. Two of these experts specialized in ELT and drama: Ken Wilson, author of textbooks that included drama, and Carolyn Graham, author of the popular Jazz Chants series (described in Chapter 3). I also presented my drama projects and spoke about the Class Acts festivals and teacher network.

Many of the teachers involved in the Class Acts Teacher Network and the ELT Drama Network also presented posters and workshops at regional and national ATECR conferences. In November 1998, Michaela Nováčková led a session on jazz chants and storytelling at a regional conference at West Bohemia University. In September 2001 several members of the ELT Drama Network (later known as EDEN) did a sample drama workshop ("Drama Day") with local children at the international conference in Zlin and presented short shows for the participants.

In 2002 and 2003, we organized two international conferences on ELT and drama. They took place at the Janáček Academy of Performing Arts in Brno (JAMU). They are described in detail in Chapter 4 (a list of presenters can be found in Appendix 4).

1.4. Financing

The development of the project was strongly influenced by funding.

The Open Society Fund (OSF) funded the project from 1994-1997. Their grants were renewed annually, and I would find out if the funding would continue the summer before the upcoming school year. Their grant covered the cost of festivals, theatre rental, honorarium for the project director, and travel and accommodation costs for teachers. It also paid for small honoraria for the teachers. In July 1997, we found out that we had not received any money for the upcoming academic year. We ran a reduced version of the project with the support of Karlínské Spektrum, ARTAMA, and the Prague Post Foundation. OSF also allowed us to use money from the previous year's budget.

The British Council supported our projects from 1998 to 2003, starting with a one-week summer school for teachers. From 1999-2001 they supported *ELT and Drama*, a long-term project with several phases. This was supposed to end in 2002, but in 2001 the BC leadership made an unexpected decision to cut most of its funding for almost all of the long-term Czech cultural and educational projects. Our project ended one year earlier than planned in 2001. The British Council continued to support one-off projects, including our international drama conferences in 2002 and 2003.

1.5. Publications about drama for Czech English teachers

There were two main magazines that published articles for English teachers in the Czech Republic in the 1990s. The BC put out a journal called *Perspectives: A Journal of English Language Teaching and British Studies*, and the ATECR had a quarterly newsletter. Both published many articles about the *Class Acts Teacher Network* and the *ELT Drama Network*. (You can find a complete list of articles about our drama projects in Appendix 1).

Perspectives published academic articles written by Czechs and foreign writers. It came out 2-3 times per year and was distributed for free to institutions focused on English (e.g. regional British Council resource centers and pedagogical centers, departments of education at Czech universities, the Ministry of Education, etc.). The BC also had a newsletter which published less academic articles.

The ATECR newsletter was less formal and was more widely distributed. They published information about upcoming summer schools, conferences, courses, and other opportunities for teachers, so it was an ideal way to publicize our projects.

The Prague Post, the largest English language newspaper in the Czech Republic, had an educational supplement and a foundation. While their target audience was expats, not Czechs, they published several articles about our drama activities. The Prague Post Foundation also gave funding to our final festival.

Two important publications that were produced during this project were the *Dramalogue* and *As If...*

The *Dramalogue* was a collection of drama lesson plans for the ELT classroom. They were written by 24 participants with the guidance of drama experts during the ELT Drama Network from 1999-2000. All participants got a copy of the *Dramalogue*, which was also distributed to the regional Czech British Council Resource Centers and other institutions (there is a copy in the library of the Department of Drama Education at DAMU).

The *Dramalogue* was inspired by *As If...*, edited by Daniela Báčová and published by the University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra and the Slovak British Council. Like the *Dramalogue*, it is a compilation of drama lesson plans developed by English teachers participating in a workshop. You can read more about the *Dramalogue* and *As if...* in Chapter 4.

Chapter 2: Working with students

“English language theatre gave me the chance to try how it is to act... I will never forget the hours and days I spent with other ‘actors’, building our characters, rehearsals and finally the performances - the horrible rush and chaos a few hours before our first performances, which gradually grew into enormous nervousness, and then the joy from the first laughter of our audience.” - Written feedback of Markéta Valterová, Gymnázium Nad Alejí student, 1994.

The drama activities I did with students from 1993-2003 laid the foundation for the projects I later ran with teachers. During these years, my approach to drama evolved as I learned from my experiences and other drama teachers.

Czech students often knew grammar but were reluctant to speak. It seemed logical to use theatre to get my students to learn vocabulary and gain speaking and pronunciation skills. I found that students were excited to work in a way they hadn't experienced before. It gave them confidence in speaking English onstage as well as in everyday contexts.

Over the next ten years, I came to appreciate more and more the potential of drama. It was not only a powerful tool for teaching language, but also for creating a positive atmosphere, teaching students to work together and develop leadership skills, giving them the satisfaction of participating in a group project from start to finish, and breaking down barriers between teachers and students.

There were other unexpected impacts. The drama projects created opportunities in school for students to discover new talents, skills, and friends. This often benefited those who were outsiders, as well as those who did not thrive in the traditional school curriculum. They were able to experience something new, something positive in what was often a rigid school environment. Too often, subjects were taught in a way that discouraged students rather than helping them discover new interests or uncover talents. Positive experiences in the realm of drama opened up a new world for many of them, and for some it influenced their future career choices.

2.1. Differences between Czech and American schools (and students)

There were certain aspects of the Czech educational system and (as a result) the students that surprised me. Some of these had a very positive impact on our drama work, while others inspired me to try to fill the gap.

On the positive side, I was very impressed by the Czech students' knowledge of theatre and how often they went to professional theatres, often with the school, but also on their own. This was very different from America, where going to professional theatre is a rare, expensive activity for most people, and definitely not an integral part of the national culture.

Czech students were disciplined and very good at learning lines when we used scripts thanks to the emphasis on memorization in the school curriculum. Many of them played musical instruments and knew the words to an impressive number of Czech and English songs.

As I mentioned earlier, very few of my students had ever been in a play, not even in elementary school. A handful of them participated in after-school drama classes and clubs that were offered by the ZUŠ (primary arts schools), institutions that were separate from the compulsory school system, or they were members of a children's theatre group in their community. But there was very little theatre in the public high schools where I worked. As I wrote in an article for the British Council's *Perspectives* journal: "*Despite a culture highly supportive of theatre, rarely is drama education offered in high schools, and teachers do not generally use these techniques in regular courses. This is in stark contrast to schools in British and American schools, where it is unusual if a student does not have some memory of appearing onstage at his school.*"⁴

In addition to the lack of theatre, there were very few after-school activities at all in Czech high schools overall, such as sports teams, clubs, newspapers, all of which were a central part of my own high school experience. Not only were opportunities to try new activities limited, but so were opportunities to meet other students. When there were school activities, they were organized for specific classes and students remained in the same group. They stayed in the same class for all four years of high school, their peer group was limited to thirty people. The school day also ended at a different time for each class of students (unlike an American school), making it extremely difficult to schedule rehearsals, which is one reason why, to this day, schools do not offer more extracurricular activities.

Parents were also much less involved. I was surprised by how few parents came to their children's shows (which we performed in the evenings and weekends). There was little precedent for families to come to school outside of the mandatory class meetings.

While the schools I worked with were generally supportive, very few Czech teachers or administrators in the school came to see our shows, including the Czech English teachers. They perceived our activities as something very foreign, and not only because of the language.

2.2. Creating opportunities, mixing kids in schools

In all of my after-school theatre projects, we had a mix of students from different classes and different years. This brought people together and created many new friendships. It had a particularly strong impact on a small group of international students and exchange students from the US who attended Gymnázium Nad Alejí. It was one of the only opportunities for them to integrate into the school community and make friends with the Czech students.

⁴ GAFFEN, Leah, "Following Comenius: Drama Education in the Czech Republic" *Perspectives: A Journal of English language Teaching and British Studies*, Prague, 1999. The British Council, p. 57.

To convince students to join my drama projects, I put up posters around the school inviting all to come to an initial information meeting. I held auditions for my shows, but I tried to create a low-pressure, welcoming atmosphere by playing drama games. I usually found a role for everyone who came to auditions, and even those who didn't get cast worked as assistants, prop makers, stage managers, etc. The auditions gave the kids a sense of accomplishment from the start and increased their sense of commitment to the project. We had auditions for each new show, giving new students a chance to participate each time.

The theatre projects gave some students a sense of purpose that they had not found in the school up to that point. Many students who had been labeled as problematic by teachers were responsible, motivated members of my theater group. They found a place of belonging and success.

In an article published in the magazine *Česká škola* in 1995, I described my thoughts about the importance of using theatre in schools. This is an excerpt from the article with my translation (you can find the Czech original in Appendix 1):

“Above all, it gives students the chance to participate in theatre productions. These experiences not only increase the students’ fluency in English, they also allow them to communicate in a foreign language with confidence. Performing in an English language play is a high motivation activity which enhances students’ vocabulary, pronunciation and self-confidence in the language. I also think that introducing theatre as an after school activity brings a new sense of camaraderie and fun to the school environment. English language drama education offers an alternative method of teaching English conversation.”⁵

2.3. Benefits of offering theatre programs in English

In terms of language, it was sometimes easier for the students to speak in English when they were playing roles rather than when they were asked to speak with their own voice. This phenomenon was described well in "Play with English", a handbook for English teachers written by members the Slovak English drama group BELTS (described more in Chapter 4):

“With drama, we are hiding behind a sort of mask (it is not me speaking English, it is not me making the horrible grammar mistake, it is e.g. Hamlet). This is one of the reasons why students, by using drama, find it easier to communicate in a language that is not their mother tongue. They are willing to learn new words, phrases, grammatical structure, no matter how

⁵ GRUŠA, Zdeněk. *Divadlo ve škole: o programu Class Acts, Festivalu i honorářích*. Praha: Česká škola: časopis nejen pro učitele, ročník II,m 95/96, p. 11.

complicated, just to make their characters as interesting, humorous and believable as possible.”⁶

Performing in English also allowed the students to take on a new identity because they were speaking another language. It gave them a chance to escape the stereotypes that others might have of them.

At the same time, when the students performed in English, there was also less pressure on them to be good actors. Most of them joined the drama projects to improve their English, not because they wanted to be actors. This brought in students who did not consider themselves “talented” and paradoxically, it made the drama attractive to a much wider range of students. A by-product of this was that many students discovered that they actually enjoyed acting and were quite good onstage.

2.4. Choosing materials/scripts

One of the most important aspects of doing a play was choosing a show. My experience searching for materials in the 1990s, before the era of the Internet, helped me know how to help teachers later.

In the beginning, I did scripted plays. Scripts had the advantage of exposing students to real language and new vocabulary, as well as original texts by acclaimed writers. I spent a lot of time choosing scripts, consulting with the students to give them a sense of ownership. I usually had to adapt the scripts quite a lot so that the language level and content was appropriate for the students. I often created shows that were collages of 4-5 scenes from different plays. This was easier to rehearse, and more students could have speaking roles. It was very important to me that each actor felt like they had an important role, no matter how small. Every character had a name – there was no “soldier 5” or “villager 3” in my plays.

I looked for plays with language that wasn’t complicated but which was sophisticated enough for my intellectual students. They liked comedy and absurdist drama with visual humor and slapstick. Playwrights like Edward Albee, Samuel Beckett, Woody Allen, and James Thurber appealed to the students’ sense of humor and also used minimalist language. When I had more time with the group, I asked them to choose from a selection of scenes to make sure that they were working on a play that they liked. For our longer, after-school plays I selected shows that were popular in American high schools - e.g. *Arsenic and Old Lace (Jezinky a bezinky)*, *Little Shop of Horrors* - that introduced the children to American culture and which appealed to the Czech sense of irony and black humor.

Over time, we began devising scenes to make the shows more specific to the group. I created a play based on *Some Like it Hot*, using the film as a guide and working with the students to adapt

⁶ LUCKÁ, Barbara, EL HELO, Silvia, DINGA, Martin, LACKO Ivan, BEDNÁR, Peter. BELTS. “Play with English, Using drama in class”. Bratislava: BELTS, 2001, p. 4.

it to our needs. Each student had a distinct character that we discovered as we improvised. For example, we created a party scene on the train with the girl band, another scene in a garage with mafia thugs, a wild chase scene in a hotel scene with a guest desperately looking for his suitcase who gets caught between the mafia and the girls in the band... I often created characters based on individual students' talents. I integrated the musical talents of two girls who loved to sing together; between each scene, the two sang haunting jazz songs.

I also tried to choose plays that incorporated visual humor and nonverbal communication that could be understood even without language. I wanted non-English-speaking audience members - parents, friends, other teachers - to enjoy the show even if they did not understand a word of English so that the inexperienced actors onstage would want to invite friends and family. In a play called *The Foreigner*, a shy protagonist doesn't want to meet new people, so he pretends he doesn't speak English. In the original he speaks gibberish, but we had the actor speak Czech, so the audience could understand this "foreign language," while the other characters onstage had to pretend they didn't.

2.5 Methods with students: what worked

What was most important in working with the students?

2.5.1 Building trust

Because so few of the students had done drama before, and also because they were being asked to perform in a foreign language, we did many activities to create an atmosphere of trust. This also helped build students' confidence in front of an audience and made them more comfortable speaking the language. We played games that taught them focus but also made them laugh. One of the favorites for all ages was Boppty Bop, a fast paced focus game that gave students the liberty to do ridiculous things in a safe, structured environment. Also, the traditional hierarchical teacher-student role shifted to a more equal one.

I asked students with stronger English to translate for students who understood less. Over time, the weaker students improved and translations were no longer necessary.

2.5.2 Adding to the plays using improv

The script was a starting point for improv games which built the students' relationships to their characters.

One of the improvisations that I used a lot was what I called One-At-A-Time. It helped me stage crowd scenes, and the students created new characters that often ended up in the play. We decided the setting beforehand, such as a train in *Some Like it Hot*. I asked all of the girls playing characters in the band to think about their specific character and one sentence about how their character feels as they get on the train to Florida. The girls "boarded" the train one by one and said their line. Then they stayed onstage, finding a place for themselves on the train and continued to do "small business" – some activity that felt natural to the character but didn't

steal focus. I played this game many times. It accomplished four things: it helped us establish the atmosphere of a location and stage a scene in a very natural way, it helped the children develop distinct characters, and it helped us develop dialogue. It also taught the students how to give and take focus and the importance of staying engaged when onstage. I often used scenes created during these improvisations in our final show.

2.5.3 Limited Dialogue

We also improvised scenes with very limited dialogue and using status techniques. What happens when status relationships change? Students internalized the dialogue by focusing on the situation or the status relationship. Consequently they spoke English (and acted) in a natural way. Many of the activities were inspired by the book *Impro* by Keith Johnstone. It is best when the dialogue is extremely simple:

A: Hello

B: Hello

A: Have you been waiting long?

B: Ages⁷

Similarly, we created original scenes using only three words or repeating phrases. This was an exercise that I often used with teachers, as the approach was easy to replicate in the classroom and could drill specific grammar in a fun way.

In our “Drama Days” described in detail in Chapter 4, we created shows with children and teachers in one-day workshops. We had very little time, so these required very simple language - often we staged “A-B” dialogues which resulted in hilarious performances.

2.5.4. Music + Rhythm

Music was a way to make the shows more accessible to the audience, and it was also an effective method to help students improve their language skills. Music made it easier to remember the text, and students automatically learned the rhythm of the language. It also increased the number of people who could actively participate and brought in people who could play musical instruments.

2.6. Festivals

In 1994-1995 I created after school plays with students from 3 different schools. I wanted the students to see each other's shows, so in April 1995 I organized the Class Acts Theatre Festival at Divadlo Komedie (The Comedy Theatre in Prague). We had eight shows in the festival - three of my own and five directed by other teachers in Prague, Brno and Olomouc. It was an exciting opportunity for the students to perform in a professional theatre, and to meet other students. It also got us excited about what show we would prepare for the next festival. For the next three

⁷ JOHNSTONE, Keith. “Impro, Improvisation and the Theatre.” Abingdon; Routledge, 1987, ISBN 978-0878301171.

years, I organized Class Acts Theatre Festivals involving more school groups and teachers. This became the core of the Class Acts Teacher Network, which is described in detail in the next chapter.

I organized the festivals in collaboration with the professional English-language theater company Misery Loves Company (MLC). Their actors and directors got involved, including Ewan McLaren, who helped backstage the first year, and Laura Zam, a playwright who directed a student show at the first festival. In later years, we organized drama workshops led by actors from the company. Some of the students who participated in our festivals were "discovered" by MLC and invited to perform in their professional shows. More importantly, festival participants got a chance to be part of their workshops and see how they approached drama. Students often commented on how open and welcoming the foreign teachers were. Many of the Prague-based students also started to regularly go to see MLC shows, where they saw a very different style of theatre⁸.

2.7. How my approach developed

In 1999, I wrote an article for the British Council's Perspectives magazine explaining my reasons for doing English theater with children:

"When I first started doing plays with my ELT students, I did so because I thought it was an ideal method to encourage my students to finally memorize their vocabulary words. Since then, I have come to realize that the benefits of drama education in the ELT classroom greatly exceed the regurgitation of vocabulary lists."⁹

As I wrote above, my early shows were very script-based. Over time, I adapted the shows more and more to my own groups. When the students created their own scenes, they had a greater sense of ownership and the end result was more interesting.

I also got inspired by drama teachers who brought shows to my festivals. Some had developed original plays based on children's books, using movement and choral speech rather than giving students individual roles. I was intrigued by approach to creating a theatre performance.

In the late 1990s, I met Barbara Lucká, the daughter of Martin Lucký who had run ASSITEJ in Czechoslovakia. Barbara had grown up doing children's theatre in Slovakia, and together we created a show with children in Roztoky u Prahy inspired by Eva Machková's *Pandora's Box* from the book *Dramatické hry a improvizácie*.¹⁰ We built the scenes from scratch, and the English dialogue in our show was very simple and created by the children. As a result, when they spoke onstage, they delivered their lines in a natural way. The same children worked with

⁸ MLC produced an excellent production of *Angels in America* by Tony Kushner, an award-winning play about the AIDS crisis, over 25 years before the Czech premiere of this play.

⁹ GAFFEN, "Following Comenius." p. 59.

¹⁰ MACHKOVÁ, Eva. "Dramatické hry a improvizácie." Bratislava: Osvetový ústav, 1981, p. 81. (translated from the Czech by Eva Melichárková). I co-taught the workshop with Barbara Lucká and we used the Slovak translation of the book.

me on several other productions, including *Apples* in which we explored different meanings behind very simple dialogues. The show was invited to the Czech National Youth Theatre Festival *Nahlížení* in 2004.

I was also inspired in 1996 by Californian drama teacher John Heckel, who led many of the workshops for English teachers that I will describe in the next chapter. He encouraged me to create shows based on original themes suggested by the students. I explored this way of working at summer camps and after school productions that I ran in the late 1990s. In 1999 I worked with Kjell Moberg on an international youth project with students from Norway and Prague; we explored masks and movement-based improvisation.

2.8. Impact on participants

What started as an interest in English evolved into an interest in theatre for many of the participants. For some, it opened up opportunities that changed the course of their lives.

The shows were huge projects that required a lot of people and a lot of talent; they brought together students from all over the school and gave them the chance to be creative. The aim of the projects was not to cultivate professionals, but the students got a chance to discover and develop their talents. This in fact did lead some of them to pursue a professional career in the arts. Thanks to Jana Stryková's performance in *Some Like it Hot* she got the chance to perform with the professional company MLC, an experience that she says led to her decision to go to DAMU. Tomáš Filouš built the stage in our classroom 105 and was our scene designer; he later became a successful architect. Some others, like Jan Budař (actor) and Jan Kořínek (jazz musician), might have pursued artistic careers in any case, but their participation in the English drama group helped them make new friends and gave them a chance to perform in an international context.

The best example of how exposure to English drama affected the participants' careers was the formation of Vosto5. Seven students who had participated in my English drama projects at Gymnázium Nad Alejí decided to start their own company after graduating in 1996. They named their company after our classroom-turned-theatre, 105, and their first performance in Czech had its premiere there. Ondřej Cihlář, Petr Prokop and David Kašpar decided to study at DAMU, where they met Jiří Havelka and others who built the theatre company into what it is today. I don't believe that the founders would have met each other if it had not been for our English drama program. Perhaps they would not have chosen to go to DAMU. This is exactly what schools should be doing: exposing students to new ideas, avenues and possibilities.

To this day, Gymnázium Nad Alejí has an English drama program where students from different classes come together and create performances.

2.9. Impact on teacher programs

My experience with students had a significant impact on how I prepared workshops and summer schools for teachers. As my work with students evolved, so did my approach to teacher training. In the following chapters, you will see how many of the principles outlined in this chapter became a core part of the teacher programs.

Chapter 3: The Class Acts Teacher Network

“It was a huge experience. I remember the warm-up games, like Bopitty bop bop bop which made me laugh. It enriched me personally. I loved English, and this was a fantastic “disguise” which gave me the courage to work differently.

“I started to incorporate games and create activities for each lesson, and it worked wonderfully. When I first started the theatre group, we did Billy Goats Gruff, one of the Jazz Chants by Carolyn Graham. The kids were very excited, which really surprised me because at the beginning, some of them said I can’t do theatre, but then they got really into it. I had one girl who was very shy and when she performed, she completely opened up. Now she is a journalist often on television, I think the experience with theatre had a huge impact on her career. There were other kids too, who overcame their fear of speaking. It taught them to use the language. We used scripts, but we also improvised a lot during the rehearsals. This completely relaxed them. And for me? Well, I have to say it in Czech. To mně dalo křídla (it gave me wings).”¹¹
- Michaela Nováčková, English teacher who participated in the Class Acts Teacher Network (1996-1998)

From 1996-1998, the *Class Acts Teacher Network* encouraged teachers to direct student plays. I selected teachers, organized teacher training weekends, provided drama resources, and visited rehearsals at schools. The project was primarily aimed at English teachers, but in 1997 we also included teachers who did school plays in Czech in an effort to promote theatre projects of any type in Czech schools.

Each year, the project culminated in a festival in Prague. For three years, the project was funded by a grant from the Open Society Fund (OSF) which covered all the costs of the program, including an honorarium for participating teachers. In the fourth year we did not have OSF funding, which led to a transformation of the program described in Chapter 4.

A total of 48 teachers joined the Class Acts Network over the four years. Nine of them participated in more than one festival, and in a few cases, other teachers from the same school joined in later years. A complete list of the shows and directors can be found in Appendix 2. There were also teachers who joined the network and did not manage to complete a show for the festival but performed them at their schools. Others created shows that they brought to our regional festivals, but were not part of the network.

Many of the principles established in this first phase of our teacher training remained in place as the project evolved in the late 1990s (described in Chapter 4). The most important was the

¹¹ Quotation from my interview with Michaela Nováčková, conducted in 2021 for the purpose of this thesis. She participated in the Class Acts Teacher Network for three years and organized a regional festival in Plzeň in 1998.

concept of *network*. I wanted teachers to feel that they were part of a team of like-minded colleagues who could share ideas and support each other. This sense of belonging helped teachers discover how valuable drama is to the school environment (not only) in the language classroom.

3.1. The origins of the project

As I mentioned in the last chapter, I organized the first festival in 1995 with a very simple goal: to bring together my own students from different schools. I also invited a few other schools to participate, as I had met other teachers (all native speakers) who had also done English plays with their students. Both students and teachers were inspired by seeing the other performances and the chance to meet one another..

This inspired me to find other English teachers willing to start theatre programs in their schools. I had two main goals: to help more students learn to communicate in a foreign language, and to change the atmosphere in schools by bringing students from different classes together and creating a supportive, positive environment. I wanted to help teachers give their students an opportunity for success that wasn't a grade on a report card.

3.2. Finding and selecting teachers

All teachers of English could apply to the project - native speakers and Czech teachers - but my aim was to include as many Czech teachers as I could, as they were more likely to stay at their schools long-term.

The use of theatre was much more common among native speakers who taught in Czech schools. It came naturally to them, as most of them came from Anglo-Saxon cultures and had grown up with this tradition. In contrast, Czech English teachers were often intimidated by theatre and drama. They rarely had any drama experience, either in Czech or in English. Many of them also lacked confidence in their level of English. Furthermore, school administrators were more likely to accept "alternative" methods from native speakers, who often taught conversation classes, a loosely-defined subject area that allowed for more flexibility. Czech English Language Teachers (ELT) teachers had to teach a curriculum and (even more importantly) to the tests.

Based on my own experience, I believed that preparing a play for a festival was a project with a highly-motivating end goal for both teachers and students. It would also bring everyone together and give them a chance to be inspired by each other's shows.

Thus, the annual Class Acts Festival became the centerpiece of this teacher training project from 1996-98. It gave the participating teachers a concrete deadline by which they had to have their shows ready and gave them all a common goal.

I wanted to find Czech English teachers from around the country who had the enthusiasm and courage to create plays. If they had theatre experience all the better, but it was not a requirement.

I used a variety of methods to recruit members:

- I conducted 90-minute introductory workshops called *So you want to produce a play with your students?* The workshop was designed for Czech English teachers with no previous drama experience. I conducted a total of 14 workshops around the country (see Chapter 1 for a list of workshops);
- I wrote articles for ATECR and the British Council newsletters;
- I sent out a mailing to all schools involved in other OSF projects;
- I presented the project at conferences, including the 1996 ATECR International conference in Prague. At that conference, my Gymnázium Nad Alejí students presented a show.

The British Council helped me find good candidates. In addition to the workshops that I gave at their resource centers and articles in their newsletter, I sent personal letters to the teachers involved in other BC programs. The BC had a prestigious Teacher Training Network, a group of about 80 (very active) English teachers from all over the Czech Republic who went through rigorous BC training courses so that they could train other Czech English teachers. In the first year of the program, one member of the Teacher Training Network joined my drama program. Others joined later. It was a partnership that would continue to grow and develop in the second phase (see Chapter 4).

The BC introductory workshops had two aims: to give everyone new ideas to take back to the English classroom, and to recruit some to join the festival project. Most of the participants had no experience with drama and had not thought about the similarities between the goals of teaching English and drama. The workshop consisted of simple drama games that could be easily introduced into the classroom. These often focused on repetition, for example, having students say neutral sentences and giving them different meanings or emotions. I presented ways to introduce this idea into the English textbook - adding an element of dramatic tension to the boring textbook dialogues. This approach demystified the concept of drama and made it easy for teachers to introduce humor to textbooks.

Teachers had to apply to join the Class Acts Teacher Network; the application process included a motivational letter (you can find the Application form in Appendix 7). While we accepted most of the applicants, this helped them formulate their own goals and ideas for the project, and when they were accepted, they started the project with a sense of success.

In the first year (1996), 15 people from 12 schools were selected for the group. About 50% of them were native speakers and 50% Czech ELT teachers. They came from all over the country: Prague, Hradec Králové, Olomouc, Vlašim, Karlovy Vary, Pardubice, Uherské Hradiště, Příbram and Plzeň. Over the next two years, many of the teachers returned with new productions. The

number of Czech English teachers increased, and there were many instances of Czech and native speakers working together on performances (described below).

In the 1996-7 school year, we included Czech school plays. To recruit teachers for this, I sent letters to teachers recommended by Jaroslav Provázek at the Creative Dramatics Association.

3.3. Supporting teachers as they created shows

The festival was set up with an achievable aim: teachers should present a show that was no longer than 15 minutes (if they did a longer play, they had to bring an excerpt). I wanted the teachers to succeed by keeping their projects simple; to be willing to experiment but not to take on more than they could handle.

The teachers had a wide range of levels and experience in both drama and English. Over the course of the project which ran each year from January to April, I organized programs to help them gain the skills and confidence to create shows. It was important to constantly work on creating an atmosphere of openness and unity in the group.

Our main activities were:

- Training weekends: we held two 3-day weekend sessions in Prague that provided theatre/directing training and practical production advice. The first was in January, at the beginning of the project, and the second in March, a month before the festival.
- School visits: between the training sessions, I visited a rehearsal at each of the schools.

Personal meetings were extremely important, especially since this was a time when many people had limited access to email and there was no social media. Communication was much more difficult than it is today, and it was easy for teachers to feel isolated as they worked on their projects.

3.3.1. Training weekends in Prague

At the first meeting in January, we focused on getting the teachers started. We discussed the selection of materials, drama and theater methods and games, staging and directing approaches. I spent a lot of time teaching them trust games which I encouraged them to use with their students.

In March we focused on problem solving - what help did teachers need to complete their show? This usually included production advice.

Free time during the training weekends was also important. Since the teachers stayed overnight, there was time to informally discuss ideas, share experiences, and draw inspiration from each other.

3.3.1.1. Helping teachers select materials

In the early years, I encouraged teachers to use scripts. I created a folder of short plays and scenes from the shows I had done. Most had been adapted and shortened to make them more appropriate for the age and language level of the students. These were humorous plays, absurd plays, and plays with physical humor. Some of the scenes in the folders were from comedies based on popular British and American playwrights (e.g. James Thurber, Neil Simon, simplified versions of Oscar Wilde). I encouraged the teachers to choose a script that they loved and also one that the students felt committed to. The choice needed to be made together so that the students were excited about the project.

Using scripts helped the students learn authentic English from the original text, and was also easier for the inexperienced teachers. However, as my own experience with drama developed, I encouraged teachers to develop original material from the children in later years. We explored ways to find topics that would be of interest to the children. During the sessions we played games and did improvisations (machines, still images) that would give the children more agency. In later years, Czech drama teacher Roman Černík and American drama teacher John Heckel led workshops to teach our teachers how to elicit original material from the children often using very limited language.

3.3.1.2. An atmosphere of trust

As with my students, I focused on making sure that the teachers felt supported by me and by each other. That was key: if the teachers felt confident, they would pass that confidence on to their students.

We always started our sessions with drama games and ended with reflection. I encouraged the teachers to model this in their own rehearsals to encourage collaboration, listening, and group ensemble.

What games worked best for this? One of the favorites was Bopitty Bop Bop Bop, a very simple game in which a person in the center of a circle points to others standing around and gives simple, silly commands, such as elephant or viking or palm tree. The group succeeds if no mistakes are made. What do students learn from this game? They learn to work together, to take risks, to be leaders, and to succeed in a foreign language. Building togetherness is essential to teaching students how to communicate.

Other games that worked well to build focus and trust in the classroom were classic games like mirrors, sculptures, and machines. A stumbling block was that teachers were often concerned about how much language was being used during the games - after all, they were supposed to be teaching English. I tried to adjust games and insert language when possible.

3.3.1.3. Directing and production

We led sessions on directing so that teachers would know how to get started. The sessions were inspired by my work with students described in Chapter 2.

The role of the teacher as director came up. The teacher needed to create a trusting atmosphere and welcome students' ideas, but to also sometimes take authority and reject students' ideas. When casting a show, teachers should nurture a sense of team and avoid fostering a sense of competition or create a "star". I suggested that they invite other teachers (music, art) to get involved.

One of the challenges for the inexperienced directors was how to stage the play. I encouraged them to think of the scenes as a series of images onstage. The students could create them, making the staging much more natural and easier to remember. We talked about "small business", i.e. small activities that the characters should be engaged in even when they are not speaking, and often played the One-at-a-time game described in chapter 2.

To help the actors develop their characters, teachers could ask students to write character biographies and think about motivation: What does each character want in a scene? We did improvisations teaching teachers the "hot seating" drama technique in which characters could be interviewed.

I urged teachers to repeat the scenes numerous times so students would remember lines and the staging. To help with pacing, I suggested that toward the end of the process they do a "speed through" and run through the show as fast, loud, and exaggerated as possible. I also suggested that they have the students run through the show in Czech to make sure that everyone understood the whole play. We discussed having them do the scenes in pantomime as well, changing roles, doing it backwards, as an opera, underwater.....

When the process wasn't working, we discussed the importance of communication, keeping up morale, and listening to the students' concerns.

In 1997, John Heckel led a directing workshop for the teachers. He showed the teachers how to create performances based on themes suggested by the students. He taught drama games such as machines and verbal orchestras and explained how these simple exercises could elicit topics of importance to the students. When leading sessions, he encouraged "side-coaching" - making comments while students were immersed in an activity (such as mirrors or sculpting) to help them develop their concentration and theatre skills.

During the second session in March, we focused on the practicalities of a production. Where would they perform? If they were performing at school, a classroom was often a better choice than a gym with terrible acoustics. How could they use student resources for costumes, props, etc.? How could they simplify their show so that it wouldn't be overwhelming? Teachers often found solutions to their own problems as they discussed them with colleagues.

3.3.2. Visiting schools

In between the training sessions, I attended rehearsals at most of the schools, especially if the teachers had no previous experience. This helped to support the teachers and it helped me to

understand the context in which they were working. It also allowed the children to get to know me before coming to the Prague festival, making it more personal and less intimidating.

When visiting with a new group, I started with drama games to get to know the children and to reinforce the importance of this approach to the teachers. The teachers knew the games from training sessions, but they were not always confident in leading them. After the warmup games, I talked with the students about the process of creating their play. This gave them a chance to reflect on the project.

There was often a difference between groups led by teachers who were native speakers and Czechs. It was less usual for a rehearsal to be led completely in English. In several cases, I was the first native speaker the children had ever met, and there was a palpable excitement in these groups. The students were taken out of the Czech context and my presence motivated them to communicate with me and each other completely in English. There was also a difference when the teachers had Czech drama experience, as they were more confident in leading the drama games and guiding their students.

Some of the teachers struggled with English and also had little drama experience. But they made up for it with their energy and enthusiasm. My visits were particularly important for these teachers. They had very good relationships with their classes because they were so dedicated and courageous. I was often very impressed by the sense of ensemble in their groups and what these teachers were able to accomplish.

3.4. Including Czech Plays in the Festival

As mentioned above, in the second year of the Class Acts Teacher Network (1996-1997), we included Czech school plays in the project. At the time, I told a reporter at the Prague Post, *“Doing English language theatre was a way of attracting people who wouldn’t do a theater program normally. But it didn’t really matter if it was in English, Czech or Swahili.”*¹²

The process was the same as in the previous year (selection, training sessions in January and March, visits to schools). Teachers from both groups (Czech and English) came together for the January and March training sessions, which were either translated into Czech or we held two parallel training sessions.

The inclusion of Czech shows had unexpected results. Two of the teachers who created plays in Czech also created plays in English (Roman Černík from Aš, Nika Štěpánková from Brno). This showed the English teachers how an experienced drama teacher approached the task of directing an English play. It also created natural connections between the Czech and English teachers. For the Czech drama teachers, the project gave them contacts and a chance to improve their own language skills. It led one of them, Nika Štěpánková, to develop her work in

¹² SMITH, Peter, *“Gaffen gets them hooked on drama.”* Prague: The Prague Post, October 29-November 4, 1997, p. C2.

English theatre. She met David Fisher and began working with his newly-formed Bear Educational Theatre Company. Later thanks to her work with David, she took part in international exchanges with schools in the UK.

Some very experienced drama teachers joined the project and brought the level of drama to a much higher level during the training sessions and at the festival, These including Tomáš Doležal from Lužánky and the above-mentioned Roman Černík, who taught at Gymnazium Aš. The English teachers (both Czech and native speakers) had the opportunity to work with them at our sessions and learn more about the world of Czech drama education.

Paradoxically, however, the inclusion of the Czech element was one of the reasons cited by the Open Society Fund when they decided not to continue funding the project. They noted its similarity to the program of the Creative Dramatics Association and ARTAMA. In the late 1990s, OSF was shifting its focus away from teaching English, so this was probably not the only reason. The lack of funding for the 1997-1998 school year led us to simplify the project. We decided to only include English plays in the 1998 festival, which made it easier to organize, but in retrospect also limited opportunities for the project.

3.5. Festival experience

In the beginning, the festivals lasted one day; in the third and fourth years, they lasted two days. Groups rehearsed on the stage in the morning, and the performances took place in the afternoon. Each presentation could not be longer than 15 minutes (some schools presented an excerpt of their show).

Presenting the shows in a "real theater" in Prague was exciting for the students (and teachers) for many reasons. The most important was their sense of accomplishment. Being included in a festival in the capital city made them feel that their hard work and final production had value. To my surprise, it was the first time some of the students had ever been to Prague, so the theater experience was tied to this milestone for them. They also got to see other students' shows, giving them ideas and inspiration.

At the 1998 festival, we ran workshops that brought children from different groups together. Some lasting friendships were made. The workshops were in English, making students proud of their linguistic achievements. The workshops were led by American and British actors living in Prague. For many of the students, this was the first time they had met or worked with a native English speaker.

In 1998, the newly -formed theater group Vosto5 opened the festival with an inspirational performance in Czech. I wanted the festival participants - students and teachers - to see the overlap between English student theatre and the world of Czech theater. I wanted them to recognize that English drama could open doors beyond language practice.

3.5.1. Prague Festivals

Below you can read about each year of the festival and see how they changed over the course of four years. You can see a complete list of shows in Appendix 2.

1995 Festival

A showcase of 8 performances at Divadlo Komedie from 5 gymnasiums in Prague, Brno and Olomouc. The goal of the first festival was to bring together students from my groups. There were also three shows directed by other teachers (all native English speakers). I discovered how the experience of seeing each other's shows inspired these teachers. This gave me a new goal for the next festival: to include shows created by more English teachers and to spread the idea to them.

1996 Festival

A showcase of 9 schools participated at this festival at Divadlo Komedie, directed by teachers from the Class Acts Training Network described above. This was the culmination of the first year of teacher training. Fifty percent of the plays were directed by Czech English teachers. Students came from all over the country, as far away as Uherské Hradiště and Olomouc. The response from teachers and students was extremely enthusiastic. Six of the teachers who attended the training sessions did not participate in the festival. Some of them had created shows that they performed in their schools, but they did not manage to finish them in time for the festival.

1997 Festival

The festival lasted two days: one day of school performances in English and one day of performances in Czech. It involved 20 schools from 11 Czech towns. A total of 230 students performed. The English plays were of much higher quality this year. Five teachers brought performances for the second year in a row, and their shows had improved in terms of confidence and creative risks. We introduced a drama games to the festival. Each day, all of the students participated in a 30-minute block of games led by drama teacher John Heckel to give students a sense of belonging to the group and to ease their nervousness. It was also a demonstration of good practice for the teachers.

1998 Festival

This was the fourth and final year of the festival, and it ran for two days, but only with English plays. We had 11 productions from 9 schools. A total of 80 students participated. We had the support of ARATMA, which allowed us to use the Center for Drama in Prague for our training sessions. We moved the festival to Karlínské Spektrum, a community center in Prague which had a small theatre. They let us use their facilities for free, prepared meals for us, and allowed participants from outside of Prague to sleep overnight in the building. We had to limit the size of the festival, but we had a lot of interest. Most of the teachers who had been involved in previous years wanted to come, some with more than one show. We launched the festival with *Podivíni na jevišti*, an inspirational performance in Czech by the company Vosto5 and directed by Ondřej Cihlář. This was one of the first productions of the company. At that time, most of the members were graduates of Gymnázium Nad Alejí who had been part of my English drama project.

Although we had less money, the space at Karlínské Spektrum allowed us to organize intensive 90-minute drama workshops for all of the participants led by volunteers from the Misery Loves Company English Theatre in Prague. These gave the students a chance to meet others from different groups and to do drama with an experienced theatre practitioner. It gave teachers a chance to observe more drama games.

3.5.2. Regional Festivals 1997-8

In 1997 and 1998, several teachers organized regional festivals. These were run locally by the participants and were not funded by OSF. They proved to be very popular and easier to organize (no accommodation, more local support from school principals or local theaters).

The first one took place in June 1997 in Uherské Hradiště, right after the national festival. It was initiated and organized by Anne Marie Schultz, an American Peace Corps volunteer teaching at ZŠ Uherské Hradiště, who participated in the 1996 and 1997 festivals. The regional festival presented performances from schools in Olomouc, Přerov, Uherské Hradiště, and Brno which had participated in the national festival. It also included other shows created by English teachers in the region. Other events included drama workshops run by volunteers from the Class Acts network. This idea inspired us to do the same at the Class Acts National Festival the following year.

In 1998, although we had less money to run the national festival, we had an increased number of regional festivals. There were three, all organized by local teachers who were part of the national festival. The one in Uherské Hradiště ran for a second year, and there were festivals in Plzeň (organized by Michaela Nováková) and Karlovy Vary (organized by Chris Martin and Blanka Dyková). The festivals brought together members of the network and brought in new people. These included drama workshops at the festival, led by volunteers, many of whom had participated in the national festival.

3.6 Dramaturgical choices of teachers and how they changed

During the four years of the festival, the teachers were inspired by each other. When we had Czech plays in the festival, it brought more inspiration.

The native English speakers usually chose scripts they found themselves and adapted, shortened and simplified. There were comedic detective stories, several scenes from Shakespeare (*MacBeth*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*). Some teachers wrote their own scripts based on children's books (one very successful show was based on *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendack).

Most Czech ELT teachers also chose scripted material, but it tended to fall into two categories: the scenes I recommended (scenes based on James Thurber stories were chosen by two teachers) or plays from ELT textbooks.

A very popular choice was a script from Carolyn Graham's *Jazz Chant Fairy Tales*. These were short plays based on famous fairy tales, written in a jazzy rhythm. Graham was invited to Prague by the US Embassy and gave workshops at conferences. Her books were also widely available in bookstores and BC Resource Centers. The scripts were written in a rhythmic, humorous style with lots of repetition, and were easy for children to remember and for teachers to access and perform.

Here is an example of one of Graham's Jazz Chant fairy tales performed by students of Michaela Nováčková, who taught at a gymnasium in Plzeň:

NARRATOR: This is the story of the Billy Goats Gruff.

CHORUS: Three Billy Goats. Billy Goats Gruff. One (clap)., Two (clap clap), Three Billy Goats. Three Billy Goats. Billy Goats Gruff.

NARRATOR: Now, the oldest Billy Goat Gruff was Bill.

CHORUS Big Bill. Billy Goat Gruff. Rough and tough. Billy Goat Gruff. Rough and tough.

BILL : Rough and tough, and ready to go, I'm a Billy Goat Gruff from head to toe.¹³

There were also a number of original shows. Some teachers adapted popular books (such as stories by Jules Verne). One notable show from our first festival was created by Hana Madrová (Švecová) and Kumar Viswanathan, English teachers from Gymnázium Hejčín in Olomouc. Called *Able Cain and Caned Able*, it was a metaphorical look at tribalism and racism. It was clear that the process that the students went through was powerful and taught much beyond the English language. (Kumar, who was from India, later moved to Ostrava and started anti-racism projects with the Roma community that is still active today).

In 1997, when we included Czech plays, many of the Czech drama teachers brought original plays to the festival. Some of them also created original plays in English. This helped to blur the lines between the Czech and English groups. It also showed the English teachers how to create a play without a script. The most successful example of this was *Paper Planet* by the very young children of Nika Štěpánková - a simple, beautiful ensemble show with extremely limited language. The children created a world out of paper (paper people, paper airplanes, paper houses), which was then destroyed by aliens. Like Carolyn Graham's *Jazz Chants*, this piece had a strong rhythmic element, which made it much easier for the children to remember and perform. Like many plays created by Czech drama groups, it had the advantage of being an ensemble performance without a "star". Many of the English teachers and students agreed that

¹³ GRAHAM, Carolyn. "Jazz Chant Fairy Tales". Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988. ISBN 978-0194342988.

this was one of the best performances of the festival, despite the fact that the actors were so young.

3.7. Evaluating the experience

A total of 48 teachers participated in the *Class Acts Teacher Network*, and thirty of whom brought shows to the festival while others performed shows in their own schools. They brought over 500 students from all over the Czech Republic to perform at the Prague festival. What were the main benefits of the project?

3.7.1. Feedback from teachers

In 1996 and 1997, I asked all teachers to complete a detailed evaluation of the project.

In written evaluations and verbal feedback, teachers consistently confirmed that the experience had a very positive impact on their teaching. They felt encouraged and very satisfied with their own work, which was enhanced by being part of a network of teachers with the same goal. Thanks to the theatre process, they gained a deeper understanding of their students. Their relationships became less hierarchical and more about the exchange of ideas.

Here are some excerpts from the evaluations:

“Working on a play with my students gave the chance to work together in a completely new way, creating much more informal, relaxed relationships between us.”

“I found out I was able to do things and I’m more confident and seriously thinking about using drama in my lessons and during my free time too.”

“Theatre is a good way to help you express yourself, your emotions. It is something that is missing in normal schools, which is a shame. Performing in English lets you use language in new situations, outside the classroom, and you aren’t just talking to your teacher”

“We’re all friends now”¹⁴

Appendix 6 contains copies of evaluation forms with responses from 1996 and 1997.

3.7.2. How did teachers think students benefited?

Teachers consistently reported that the project motivated their students and increased their self-confidence and confidence in language. It also fostered new friendships, created a positive atmosphere in school, and increased students' interest in school. *“Children were willing to come to school before 7 a.m. to rehearse. That was very unusual.. They didn’t believe they could manage it, but they did,”*¹⁵ said Blanka Dryková, who developed an original show based on

¹⁴ Anonymous quotations from written evaluation forms.

¹⁵ SMITH, “Gaffen gets them hooked on drama.” p. C2

Jules Verne. Chris Martin, who taught at a secondary school focused on teacher education (Střední pedagogická škola) in Karlovy Vary wrote in his evaluation that: *“This enriched them beyond the language.”*

Michaela Nováková, who participated in three festivals, described the benefits of drama education in an article for the ATECR newsletter: *“At our small gymnázium we now have three English drama groups. We write our own texts, and students work together on writing and staging the plays. Drama activities make learning interesting, help shy students overcome their fears, help students learn and use new words, structures, word order, create a good friendly atmosphere in the class. Drama works and helps!”*¹⁶

I interviewed Michaela Nováčková in 2021 for this thesis, and again, she remembered how much drama had helped build students' confidence: *“The kids were very excited, which really surprised me because some of them at the beginning said I can't do theatre.... I had one girl who, when she performed, completely opened up. Now she is a journalist often on television, I think the experience with theatre had a huge impact on her career. There were other kids too, who overcame their fear of speaking. It taught them to use the language.”*

Surprisingly, improvements in the technicalities of English (vocabulary, pronunciation) were of secondary importance. Teachers reported that the most valuable aspect of the project was deeper. It was about how it boosted the students' self-esteem, how they made new friends, and how the noncompetitive atmosphere of the festival promoted the children's mental health. *“We are all winners,”* one wrote in her evaluation.

3.7.3. Benefits to teachers

Many of the teachers told me that they developed confidence in their own language and drama skills thanks to the Class Acts Teacher Network.

The experience also gave many of them other professional skills: several of them organized regional festivals, developing their organizational experience. They wrote articles that were published in the ATECR newsletter, and some led workshops on English drama at ATECR conferences.

I invited Michaela Nováčková, Blanka Dryková and Jana Procházkova, who had all brought shows to our workshops, to join the teaching team of the 1998 Drama Education Summer School for English Teachers, which I organized with the support of the British Council. These three women were given the opportunity to train other teachers and demonstrate how they had experienced the benefits of drama. It was the first time that Michaela and Blanka had led such sessions. As a result of their experience with the project, professional opportunities opened up for them.

¹⁶ NOVÁČKOVÁ, Michaela, “Benefits of Drama Education to the English Teacher.” Prague, 1999, Association of English Teachers in the Czech Republic. Vol 10, No. 1, Spring 1999, p. 31.

3.7.4. Challenges/Mistakes

Creating a show for the festival demanded a huge investment in many areas: time, money, energy, often led to conflicts with school administration. In many cases, this led to burnout.

Through written evaluations and discussions with teachers, I learned about the many logistical challenges. Finding time for activities was always difficult - scheduling rehearsals, finding time for games and other drama activities, finishing the show on time. A depressing number of teachers reported that the school directors and other teachers in the school were uninterested and unsupportive. Some of the teachers had colleagues who undermined their work, including one director who instructed the children to perform the show differently from how the teacher wanted. Parents tended not to get involved. This was very different from what I would have expected in an American school, where principals brag about such activities and parents often sew costumes, raise money, distribute programs, etc.

The Czech English teachers didn't feel they had as much in common with the Czech drama teachers as they did with each other, even though the symbiosis of the two groups was so inspiring. When we had to decide how to simplify the project in the fourth year because of funding, it seemed logical to focus on English plays only. In retrospect, if we had followed OSF's advice and partnered with ARTAMA, we might have been able to continue producing festivals after 1998.

3.8. Decision to suspend festival: An ending and a beginning

I saw how much the experience meant to the students and the teachers. I saw how much the teachers appreciated the opportunity to be part of a group of like-minded educators. This was especially true for teachers from small towns and unsupportive schools who often felt isolated in their creative approach to teaching. I saw how much they appreciated the chance to break down the hierarchy in the structure of their classes.

I also saw how hard it was for the teachers for the reasons I mentioned above. It was also hard for me from an organizational and production standpoint, especially when we had less funding. Was there a way to give teachers and students the same opportunity to create the shows together, but without the festival?

As our funding dwindled, The BC decided to support our efforts to bring theatre to schools in a different way - by focusing on how it could be used in the classroom. This led us to build a new structure that was not based on an expensive, time-consuming (albeit exciting) national festival. In the next chapter, I will explain this new direction and how it drew from the experiences we gained from the Class Acts Teacher Network.

Chapter 4: ELT Drama Network

“If I hadn’t done the [drama] course, I would be an ordinary academic English teacher. It was magic.”- Šárka Dohnalová, lecturer, Faculty of Education, Masaryk University¹⁷

As the era of the Class Acts Festivals came to an end, the era of the ELT Drama Network began. The projects of this phase introduced English teachers to drama methods that were intended for the classroom, not the stage. My own view of drama also changed during this process. Instead of aiming primarily to have teachers create shows, I started focusing on how the principles of drama can change any lesson. The aim was to use drama as a “principle of working that can inform the whole way a teacher approaches language learning.”¹⁸

Most books for ELT teachers that offered drama activities presented drama as a method for warm-up activities or as a fun supplementary activity in which students repeated language they had learned. The ELT Drama Network opened up a whole new approach to teaching English. It went much deeper and explored how drama could frame an entire lesson in a foreign language classroom.

Over the course of five years, the ELT Drama Network developed and flourished. Towards the end, we gave it a new name: EDEN - the English Drama Education Network. Indeed, it felt a bit like an educational paradise for the participants. The immersive drama experiences, the like-minded educators in the group, the beautiful teaching center in Slapanice u Brna where most of our sessions took place, the passionate trainers, the chance to meet colleagues from other countries who were also discovering ways to use drama. These experiences and many more resonated with the participants in a truly life-changing way. Today, many of them continue to spread the ideas and principles of drama that they first encountered during the project. It has led to career changes and lifelong friendships.

Many people and institutions contributed to the success and impact of this project. The most important was the Czech office of the **British Council**. In addition to providing long-term financial support, they were true partners of the project, helping to shape its concept, structure and vision. Their long-term commitment ensured that the project would have a lasting impact. Another key contributor was **Radka Svobodová**. Radka was a drama educator teaching at Charles University with no experience in teaching English. She came to an early session and introduced us to Jonothon Neeland’s concept of **structuring drama work**. The participants were enthralled by her lesson, which opened their eyes to a whole new approach for teaching English. Similarly, **Geoff Fox and Stephen Cockett** from the University of Exeter had a background in drama, not ELT. They led a summer school which showed how key drama techniques (hot seating, teacher in role, still images) could be integrated into the classroom and how the aims of drama and language teaching coincide. Another fundamental aspect of the

¹⁷ Interview conducted for this thesis, May 2021.

¹⁸ BÁČOVÁ, Daniela & PHILLIPS, Tim. eds. “As if... Drama-based Lesson Plans for English Language Teaching.” Bratislava: The British Council, 2000, p. 3.

project was our collaboration with the **Slovak Drama SIG**, a similar project in Slovakia led by Daniela Bacova and Tim Phillips. It is impossible to overestimate their impact on our Czech drama project. They also introduced us to **Drama Days**, which became a crucial part of the ELT Drama Network. Finally, the project flourished because of our open-minded **participants**, many of whom became strong leaders in the field. Few of them had any drama experience when the project began, but they embraced the new ideas and developed them in individual, often surprising, ways. This group of about 40 core members brought an extraordinary level of commitment and energy to the project. Perhaps most importantly, they became a strong, cohesive group that worked together to build new projects and extend the principles of drama education to others around the country.

Recently I interviewed Lucie Podroužková, one of the participants, about why she thought the project worked. *“You helped us realize that drama doesn’t have to be about a product - this is how we thought about drama before - rehearsing a performance, a show for the parents, i.e. a huge undertaking and massive stress. Instead, you modeled drama as a process. For me, that was revolutionary and liberating. The way you taught us to understand drama was inclusive, whereas previously I thought of drama as something exclusive - only for extroverts and exceptionally talented people.”*

4.1. The British Council

4.1.1. Overview of BC teacher training projects

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, the British Council was the most significant organization in ELT teaching in the Czech Republic in the 1990s. One of its most important projects was their long-term Teacher Training Network with 80 Czech teachers of English described in Chapter 1. The group went through a long-term training program in the UK and the Czech Republic, creating a network that could pass on progressive ideas to other Czech English teachers around the country. At the same time, the BC organized several teacher training projects focusing on specific areas such as ELT for young learners, ELT in Departments of Education at Universities, ELT and technology.

4.1.2. Initial Cooperation with the British Council

Before we started the ELT Drama Network in 1999, I had worked with the BC on many projects. As described in Chapter 3, the BC Resource Centers hosted many of the short drama workshops that I had been running since 1995.

In 1998, they supported a week-long summer school focused on drama - a "prequel" to the ELT Drama Network. I organized it in collaboration with the Center for Distance Learning at Masaryk University. This summer school drew from my experiences in the Class Acts Teacher Network. We used scripts, jazz chants, and created skits for the classroom. I also emphasized the importance of trust, which I described in an article about the summer school published in *Perspectives*, the British Council journal: *“It is essential to create an atmosphere of trust and ensemble. This is as important in a foreign language classroom as it is in the theatre. We did*

this with daily warm ups and cool downs, evening group discussions and project work where the teachers worked in small groups. Not only did the teachers gain confidence in their own [spoken] English ... they were increasingly willing to take risks as individuals in the group."¹⁹

The summer school also included an "apprentice" program - three assistant teachers (Czechs) who had been part of the Class Acts Teacher Network (Michaela Nováčková, Jana Procházková and Blanka Drková). They directed original adaptations of Little Red Riding Hood with the participants (each using a different genre - a spaghetti western, a parable about drugs, a jazz chant based on the Roald Dahl poem). They wrote an article about their experiences in the ATECR newsletter, in which they wrote that "a network of Czech teacher trainers will be able - at least we hope - to encourage non-native English teachers to try drama techniques, motivating them to pass the experience on to their students... this is also highly beneficial to our personal development."²⁰

In 1999 we ran a second summer school. I co-taught with Eva Kučerová Sikorová who was teaching in the English department of the Faculty of Education at the University of Ostrava. Eva had also studied drama education, and she was an ideal partner for the new directions that our project was going.

4.1.3. How the project developed into a longer-term British Council program

In 1999, the British Council in the Czech Republic made a decision that led to the creation of the ELT Drama Network.

Malcolm Griffiths, Director of Education, decided to make ELT and drama one of their long-term educational priorities. He invited us to develop a 3-year project. He and his staff offered support in management, implementation and funding. Their own goal was to create a project that would be sustainable in the long term. This was a significant difference from OSF, which had only provided funding but never contributed to the management or vision of the project. Malcolm and his assistant, Staša Závitkovská, became the guarantors of the project from the BC.

Malcolm and Staša were also in charge of the Teacher Trainer Network mentioned above (4.1.1.). They encouraged the members of that group to join the drama project. These teacher trainers eventually made up 20% of the participants in our drama group. This was ideal for a number of reasons. The teacher trainers were excellent teachers. They had gone through intensive training programs with the BC in methodology, and many of them had experience organizing summer schools, conferences, programs at university departments of education, etc. They had many contacts with educational centers, publishers, and teachers throughout the country. They were in a perfect position to become future ELT drama trainers and to help the drama project flourish.

¹⁹ GAFFEN. "Following Comenius: Drama Education in the Czech Republic". p. 57.

²⁰ NOVÁČKOVÁ, Michaela, PROCHÁZKOVÁ, Jana, DRYKOVÁ, Blanka. *Experiences of a Czech Counterpart*. Prague: ATECR Newsletter, Vol 10, No. 1 Spring 1999. , p. 31.

Serendipitously, the British Council in Slovakia was launching a very similar project at the same time; this had a huge influence on us. Tim Philips was the equivalent of Malcom Griffiths at the British Council in Slovakia. He worked with Daniela Báčová, a professor of English at the University of Constantine in Nitra, Slovakia who had a strong background in drama education. One of their aims was to establish international links with others working in drama and ELT in the region. Eva Kučerová Sikorová and I attended their summer school in Nitra in 1999. They also provided funding so 5 Slovaks could join our ELT Drama Network, and many of their leaders taught at our weekend workshops. They also introduced us to their Drama Days, which we duplicated in the Czech Republic (more below in section 4.6)

4.1.4. Premature ending

The project was designed with sustainability in mind. The original plan was that the last year (2001-2002) would focus on management and long-term planning.

Unfortunately, the need for this came sooner than expected. In 2000, the British Council-Czech Republic made a nationwide decision to end much of its educational and cultural programming. This included closing its regional resource centers and bringing forward the deadlines of ongoing projects.

As a result, we had to accelerate our efforts to establish the independence of the Drama Network. BC staff helped us facilitate management meetings, which meant that there was less time for drama training. BC's regional resource centers, which had provided access to training materials, workshops, and meeting places for local ELT communities, were closed.

We met with several potential partners to decide what our institutional structure should be, including Jaroslav Provazník from the ARTAMA. We decided to become a part of the Association of English Teachers in the Czech Republic (a SIG, or special interest group), which was the same model as similar groups in Slovakia and Poland.

The most important activities of our "post-BC" era were two international conferences in 2002 and 2003, described below.

4.2. How concepts of structuring drama shaped the project

The first meeting of the ELT Drama Network took place in October 1999. When we talk about the project today, most of the participants point to one particular moment that changed their view of drama: Radka Svobodová's drama lesson based on a romantic play by the German playwright Friedrich Schiller, *Cabal and Love*. Radka's lesson was structured with a set of drama conventions inspired by the approach described in Tony Goode and Jonothon Neeland's influential book *Structuring Drama Work*.²¹ (an informal Czech translation by Radím Svoboda of

²¹ NEELANDS, Jonothan and GOODE, Tony, *Structuring Drama Work*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, ISBN 978-0521376358.

this book was published in 1995 in *Deník Dětské scény*, the newsletter of the Children's Stage Festival newsletters²²). In our group, this type of lesson became known as "Structured Drama" and that is the term I will use in this thesis.

For many participants in our group, Radka's structured drama lesson was the "light bulb" moment that showed teachers how to use drama in the English classroom. Our understanding of structured drama was a type of lesson that uses different drama conventions and techniques (pantomime, teacher-in-role, improvisation) to immerse participants in a particular story or theme. The lesson creates high-stakes situations in which the students feel compelled to communicate. The aim of the drama lesson is *not* a performance.

Radka Svobodová taught drama at the Faculty of Education at Charles University, and she had never taught English. She presented this lesson partly in Czech. But our teachers were completely fascinated by it. In a recent interview for this thesis, Šárka (Bendová) Dohnalová talked to me about how the lesson affected her:

*"When I saw the Alley of Conscience [Conscience Alley - a drama convention in which the students speak to the protagonist in the story], so many things came together. We were all standing there, giving advice and using the grammatical form of If I were you. It was so natural to give advice, so clear. I thought, This is it! This was a way to teach difficult grammar that I had had problems teaching! ... I learned what drama was - not memorizing scripts, but understanding, experiential. It was so powerful. "*²³

Šárka was not the only one moved by the lesson. All of the teachers felt compelled to talk about the choices the characters faced throughout the lesson, and they understood how motivating it could be for their own students. During the first year of the ELT Drama Network, the participants were required to create a lesson plan using drama. Many of them modeled their lessons on this one, especially the high school and university teachers who created lessons to teach British and American literature and history.

Like Šárka, the teachers saw that drama could also be effective for practicing vocabulary or grammatical structures. Conrad Toft and Andrea Sabová Billíková from the English Department of the University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra, Slovakia led workshops on how to use structured drama to teach difficult English grammar. Unlike Radka, Conrad and Andrea came from the world of English teaching. Over several years, they developed a series of Fairy Tale Lessons that taught English grammar structures through well-known stories. You can find an example of one of these lesson plans in Appendix 10.

One of the lessons they presented at the ELT Drama Network was based on the traditional story of the Frog Prince. In the story, a prince has been turned into a frog and needs the princess to kiss him to undo the spell. First, the children "meet" an imaginary frog that they pass around the circle, each saying something nice to the frog. Later, everyone goes up to the frog individually.

²² Deník Dětské scény v roce 1995, č. 1-9.

²³ Interview with Šárka Dohnalová in May 2021 for this thesis.

The rest of the class says "If you kiss the frog..." and the child in the middle says something like "then he will get bigger and bigger" or "then he will be happy" or "then he will turn into a prince". At the end, the children create a dialogue between the princess and the frog - but only using if-then phrases, such as:

- *If you ask me to the castle, then I will give you the ball*
- *If you give me the ball, then I will give you dinner"*
- *If you kiss me, I will turn into a prince"*²⁴

Much time was spent during the lesson to allow the children to imagine the frog so that they would want to talk to it. Conrad and Andrea described their approach to creating these lessons:

*"We want to show that drama is an appropriate tool for any stage of learning grammar. ... through a variety of techniques, progressing from nonverbal to verbal activities (mime, choral and individual drilling, a jazz chant, creating dialogues and final performances), learners are given enough opportunities to verbalize and practice the new language structure directly in context, as a class, in groups, pairs and individually."*²⁵

There were several other drama leaders who presented similar types of lessons, including Eva Kučerová - Sikorová (University of Ostrava) and Mária Vargová (University of Prešov, Slovakia), who led a history-based lesson about the Great Fire of London. Mária also led a lesson on racism based on the poem *The White Wedding* by Alice Crotch. One of our participants, Milena Vodičková used the lesson plan several years later for her later research on the efficacy of drama for teaching literature.

All of these drama-based English lessons did more than teach language skills. They taught new ways of thinking, feeling and understanding by tapping into the students' emotions and imaginations.

4.3. The Dramalogue

Dramalogue

At the end of the first year of the ELT Network (Spring 2000), participants had to produce an English lesson plan using drama. We compiled all the lesson plans into a booklet called *The Dramalogue*. There were a total of 25 lesson plans written by 22 teachers. About half of them were written for young learners (elementary and middle school), and half for secondary school or university students.

Teachers were encouraged to take a holistic approach when writing the lesson plans, considering social and dramatic as well as language goals. They tested the lesson plans in their classrooms and then presented them to each other. We recommended that they follow a

²⁴ TOFT, Conrad and SABOVÁ Andrea, "The Frog Prince lesson, Dedicated Space Journal" Nitra: University of Constantine the Philosopher, 1999.

²⁵ TOFT, Conrad and SABOVÁ Andrea, "Practicing Grammar through Drama." Dedicated Space, Nitra: The British Council and University of Constantine the Philosopher, Issue 2, 2000, p. 4-6.

four-stage outline for teaching English through drama created by Daniela Báčová, founder of the Slovak drama SIG. She divided the lesson into four phases: a warm-up, a pre-drama (introducing the topic using some drama techniques), a drama in which they delve deeper into the topic and come to a kind of catharsis, and a cooling down phase in which they reflect on the activities.

The lesson plans were strongly influenced by the structured drama lessons of Radka, Mária, Conrad, Andrea and others. Many of them included social skills in their learning objectives, such as promoting empathy, understanding, building trust, encouraging cooperation and group work.

A good example of this was the lesson plan written by Eva Duspivová (Gymnázium, Vimperk), who taught students about an American poem called Richard Cory. It is about a rich man whom everyone envied and admired; in the last two lines of the poem we learn that he committed suicide. One of her learning goals was to encourage students to learn to empathize and understand that things are not always what they seem on the surface. As a warm-up, she showed a picture of Richard Cory and asked the students what they thought he looked like. She read the poem without the last two sentences. In the "pre-drama," students walked around the classroom pretending to be his neighbors and told each other what they thought of him. In the drama, they made still pictures of his life and then voiced his thoughts. The teacher put on a hat to represent Richard Cory and sat in the middle of the room (Teacher in Role); the students said one sentence to him to say goodbye. During the lesson's calming down phase, students wrote a short letter to Richard Cory before he shot himself.

Many of the other teachers developed lesson plans using a similar approach. Milena Vodičková, who taught English literature and history at the Faculty of Education in Palacky University Olomouc, created a lesson plan based on the characters of *Romeo and Juliet*. Pavla Fejfarová from the Department of Education at Hradec Králové wrote a lesson inspired by Jane Austen. Several years later, both Milena and Pavla used these lesson plans as the basis for their doctoral research on ELT and drama (more in chapter 5).

Some teachers created lesson plans based on ELT textbooks that they used. Ludmila Havriljuková and Marcela Kovářová based their lesson for children aged 10-12 on a comic strip in their textbook about a prehistoric boy called Snowboy.

In *The Dramalogue*, some of the teachers included an evaluation of how the lesson worked in their classrooms. They all wrote that students appreciated the opportunity to actively participate in the lesson, which helped them learn English and the history/literature presented. They also liked that the drama lesson changed their relationship with their students, making it less hierarchical. They all noted time management issues and how difficult it is to run a good drama class in 90 minutes. One teacher said that the introverts in her class found the lesson challenging, but said they would like to do more drama to help them overcome inhibitions about speaking. One teacher wrote "*my students' positive responses were the best reward.*"²⁶

²⁶ Eds GAFFEN, Leah and ZAVITKOVSKÁ, Staša. DRAMALOGUE: A collection of lesson plans integrating drama in the ELT Classroom. Prague: The British Council, 2000.

Eva Duspivová wrote about the experience of doing the lesson in an article for the ATECR newsletter: *"Thanks to drama, I learned to introduce my students to literature in a more interesting way. They experienced emotions hidden in poetry and would communicate their feelings and empathize with others...they came to understand that we learn a language to communicate, which is not the same as mastering vocabulary and grammar."*²⁷

We printed copies of the Dramalogue for each of the participants, and gave copies to the British Council Resource Centers, our colleagues in Slovakia, and ARTAMA.

Šárka Dohnalová, who created a lesson based on The Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens, recently told me in an interview for this thesis: *"The process of creating lesson plans was very important. The class made us write lesson plans and then we got feedback – that was very helpful. We had to try it with our students. I rewrote the lesson plan three times. And I still use it today."*²⁸

Two complete lesson plans (Richard Cory and Snowboy) from the Dramalogue can be found in Appendix 10.

4.4. Keep Talking: Geoff Fox and Stephen Cockett

Two British drama specialists taught for our project: Geoff Fox and Stephen Cockett, senior lecturers in the School of Education at Exeter University in South-West England. They ran an intensive summer course for the ELT Drama Network in July 2000 and for the Slovak Drama SIG in 1999. Their teaching brought laughter, joy and a creative, sensible approach to making drama relevant in the classroom.

Like Radka Svobodová, they had drama backgrounds, not ELT backgrounds. However, they had worked with English teachers in Poland, where they used improvisation, poetry and storytelling to enhance English language learning. They believed strongly in the logical overlap between language teaching and drama. Students will learn a foreign language if they are motivated to speak, and drama is a natural way to provide that motivation in the classroom. Their approach dovetailed with the principles Radka had introduced: how to create an emotional, physical connection to a character and a story. They co-authored a book called "Keep Talking: Theater and Storytelling in the Language Classroom" based on their work with English teachers in Poland in the 1990s. It offers an unintimidating, practical guide to using drama in the English classroom. Drama, they argue, is a natural methodology for language teaching and makes speaking English easier, not harder.

"Drama is more than just doing and talking. It's about acting roles in fictional situations. What is the appeal of doing this? Acting as another character, attention is deflected from ourselves;

²⁷ DUSPIVOVÁ, Eva, Prague: "ELT Drama Network." ATECR Association of English Teachers in the Czech Republic, vol 11, No. 3, Winter 2000, p. 29.

²⁸ Interview with Šárka Dohnalová, conducted in May 2021 for this thesis.

*paradoxically, we may feel more able to speak freely in role than to speak as ourselves. Going into role, then, is like putting on a mask. It both protects and liberates...from behind the mask, it is easier to peak and move, experiment and take risks.*²⁹

A basic principle of the book is the idea that dramatic tension motivates students to speak. To illustrate, they took standard role plays that most English teachers do in their classes and added a dramatic “hook” to create tension:

- Role play: You are in a tourist office. One student is a chatty receptionist. Two students are customers who are tired and need a hotel room. They ask for an affordable hotel. The desk clerk doesn't want to tell them because he knows the only affordable hotel is so bad. Hook: The desk clerk will talk about anything but hotels.
- Role play: You made it to the hotel. It was terrible. You left in the middle of the night to go to a five star hotel. One student is a doorman, two students are the customers. Hook: The doorman thinks that the customer is the prime minister traveling incognito and gives them the royal suite.

Geoff and Stephen encouraged the teachers to have all of the children do the improvisations at the same time, and for there to be an ongoing scenario of 4-5 scenes so the children can get into the story.³⁰

Another simple exercise was called the Fantastic Journey: two friends have just completed a trip around the world full of adventures. They are speaking to a journalist. They tell their story, which gets more and more fantastical as they continue talking.³¹

Geoff and Stephen presented many different drama techniques. They showed how still images could allow students to explore English children's literature as well as tackle difficult social issues. Towards the end of the course, they presented a poem called *Harry Pushed Her* by Peter Thabit Jones about a girl in a wheelchair. Students created still images inspired by lines from the poem and imagined the thoughts of the character. We staged a school board meeting to discuss how to help the girl, using the Mantle of the Expert drama technique.

Geoff and Stephen's approach showed how an entire English lesson could be based on drama. This was fundamentally different from most popular ELT books on drama (e.g. “Drama Techniques in Language Teaching: A Resource Book of Communication Activities for Language Teaching” by Alan Maley and Alan Duff; “Drama with Children” by Sarah Phillips, “Drama Activities for Language Learning” by John Dougill), where drama is supplementary activity that can be added to the main lesson as a warm-up or a way to practice dialogue. Geoff and Stephen demonstrated how drama could be a primary approach to teaching a foreign language.

²⁹ Fox, Geoff and COCKETT, Stephen, *Keep Talking: Theatre and Storytelling in the Language Classroom*, p. 10.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.45

³¹ *Ibid.*, p 53

They also encouraged teachers to introduce social issues and other difficult topics into the classroom. They broadened the teachers' view of their role - as language teachers, they had the potential to teach so much more.

4.5. Slovak Drama SIG

I first met Geoff and Stephen in 1999 in Slovakia, where they were leading a summer workshop for the Slovak Drama SIG³². They were one of the many contacts that we made through working with our counterparts in Slovakia. Professional and personal friendships developed, as well as endless ideas and inspiration

Tim Phillips and Daniela Bačová founded the Slovak SIG was founded in 1999, the same year as the ELT Drama Network.

Daniela, along with Conrad Toft and Andrea Sabová Billíková, ran courses on drama and English teaching at the University of Constantine the Philosopher. Andrea was originally a student of Daniela at the same university, and Conrad came from Britain with a background in amateur theater. All three (and others) spread the use of drama techniques in foreign language teaching in Slovakia through workshops, research and articles.

4.5.1 Publications and other publications

4.5.1.1. As if...

Their first major project was this summer school in Modrova, Slovakia taught by Geoff and Stephen. The content was similar to our own summer school the following year. About 35 teachers from Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Latvia and Lithuania participated.

Alongside Geoff and Stephen's drama training, the participants in the summer school created drama-based lesson plans for English class. They were later compiled into a publication called *As if...*, which was edited by Daniela and was widely distributed in the region. Like the *Dramalogue* (which was inspired by *As if...*), the collection shows different examples of how drama can be used as a primary method for English lessons.

To help teachers create lessons, Daniela created a template that divided the lesson into four phases: warm ups, pre-drama, drama, and reflection. In Appendix 9, you can find the template which we also used for the *Dramalogue*. Teachers were encouraged to consider the following objectives:

- Linguistic objectives defining what language is to be taught & practiced in the class
- Skills objectives - defining what language skills are to be taught and practiced
- Social objectives - defining what interactive skills are to be developed

³² SIG stands for Special Interest Group. The group was an official part of the Slovak Association of Teachers of English, the equivalent of the ATECR in the Czech Republic.

- Drama objectives defining what drama skills are to be developed
- Content/cultural objectives defining what content/cultural knowledge is to be taught³³

The title of the book refers to the importance of putting English learners in “as if” situations - to create a lesson with a much less predictable outcome than what a normal textbook offers.³⁴ This motivates students to learn and creates an opportunity to learn the language in a natural way-including specific grammatical structures. It is not, as Andrea Sabová Billikova wrote in a later book for teachers, “*just a few fun activities to liven up the end of a class on a Friday afternoon but a principled way of working that can inform the whole way a teacher approaches language teaching.*”³⁵

Daniela wanted teachers to understand that the potential of the drama lesson plans was greater than that of a standard English lesson. In the introduction to the book, she wrote: “*The outcomes of these lessons tend to be much less predictable than those of more conventional coursebook-based lessons. That is the point a drama lesson seeks to motivate students to take responsibility for the development of the lesson. The teacher's role is to create dramatic frames that relate to the concerns of the students and to create the conditions in which the students release themselves into the lesson.*”³⁶

4.5.1.2. Dedicated Space

In the fall of 1999, Daniela launched *Dedicated Space*, a journal published by the Faculty of Arts at the University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra, Slovakia, in cooperation with the British Council. “*Our aims are to provide a forum for ideas, information and news concerning all aspects of the subject, from classroom techniques to performance to teacher training. In particular we would like to explore the ways in which drama can be used as a way of thinking about the classroom, a physical, emotional and intellectual space that is dedicated to learning. Above all, we want to explore how drama can help language teaching to achieve, in Gavin Bolton's words, ‘the change in understanding’ which is at the heart of real learning.*”³⁷ They published information about what teachers in the region were doing, including research and practical advice and lesson plans for teachers. In the second issue, which came out in the winter of 2001, they published two drama lesson plans that were also presented at the ELT Drama Network during our weekend training sessions: *The Frog Prince* by Conrad Toft and Andrea Sabová Billiková and *The Great Fire of London* by Eva Sikorová- Kučerová (University of Ostrava, Czech Republic) and Mária Vargová (University of Prešov, Slovakia).

³³ BILIKOVA, Andrea and KISSOVA, Mária. “Dramatic Techniques in the Foreign Language Classroom.” Nitra: University of Constantine the Philosopher, 2013, p. 85. ISBN 978-80-558-0328-9.

³⁴ BÁČOVÁ, Daniela & PHILLIPS, Tim. “As if... Drama-based Lesson Plans for English Language Teaching.” p. 4.

³⁵ BILIKOVA, Andrea and KISSOVA, Mária. p. 85.

³⁶ BÁČOVÁ, Daniela & PHILLIPS, Tim. p. 4.

³⁷ BÁČOVÁ, Daniela. *Introduction*, *Dedicated Space*. Vol. 1, No. 2, Winter 2000. Faculty of Arts at the University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra, p. 1.

4.5.2 Conrad Toft and Andrea Sabová Billíková

Daniela Bačová worked closely with Conrad Toft and Andrea Sabová Billíková, colleagues from the University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra, who were also researching drama in ELT. They became known for their lesson plans that used fairy tales and drama to teach grammar. They wrote the aforementioned *Frog Prince* lesson plan which they presented at the ELT Drama Network. Conrad and Andrea continued to coordinate projects and conferences well into the 2000s.

4.5.2. International Networking

One of the priorities of the Slovak drama group was to network with the neighboring countries and try to bring together people with experience and expertise in drama. As mentioned above, they invited participants from 6 countries to the first summer school (many of these participants had their expenses covered by their own regional British Council). It brought together people who all wanted to bring innovative educational methods to their post-communist societies. They also organized several international conferences in later years.

Their publications also focused on what was happening in the region, particularly *Dedicated Space*.

In Bratislava, BELTS, a group of university students, brought together many international groups through festivals and other events in the next section.

4.5.3. BELTS and Drama Days

In the mid-90s, a British lecturer, Paul Stocks, taught English at the Faculty of Arts at Comenius University in Bratislava. He used improvisation and theatre techniques in his teaching, inspiring his students to found the Bratislava English Language Theatre Slovakia (BELTS). This group produced many shows in English and performed regularly at theatres in Bratislava. For several years, they also organized international theatre festivals, inviting student groups from the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary. This group also worked closely with the Slovak Drama SIG. They participated in the Slovak Summer School in Modrava in 1999, befriending their Czech counterparts.

This enthusiastic core of about 8 student actors brought a lot of talent and energy to the Czech Republic in the following years. Three of them joined the ELT Drama Network and many of them came to the Czech Republic regularly to participate in our events.

The BELTS students introduced us to Drama Days, a project they created with Paul Stocks. Drama Days were one-day workshops led by the students for teachers and students at local schools. Over the course of a day, the children created short, original English shows and performed them for each other.

In 2001, BELTS published a teacher's manual entitled *Play with English: Using Drama in Class* which was supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic. It included a series of

lessons describing the process of creating a short drama sketch. In addition to a description of activities, they provide a list of drama games, an overview of the theory of drama in education, and a description of commonly used drama techniques (sculpting, teacher in role, hot seating, etc).

4.6. Drama Days in the Czech Republic

With the help of the BELTS students, we imported Drama Days to the Czech Republic. They became a huge phenomenon for our group. At least 12 Czech Drama Days were organized between 1999 and 2001. About half of the members of the ELT Drama Network participated in at least one Drama Day (many did multiple ones) - either as participants, organizers, or drama leaders. Many traveled hours to participate, often bringing their students with them. Dozens of teachers and hundreds of children, ranging in age from 12 to university level, participated in a Drama Day. The drama leaders were volunteers – mostly from our ELT Drama Network and the Slovak Drama SIG.

The Drama Days proved to be a very effective way of training teachers to become drama leaders. Initially, the workshops were led by the Bratislava students and experienced drama leaders from the ELT Drama Network (myself, David Fisher, Dominika Adamová and others). Later, members of our ELT Drama Network started to lead or co-lead the groups with more experienced drama teachers. There was always one group made up entirely of English teachers (which included members of the ELT Drama Network), giving teachers a chance to experience the joy of drama as participants. This also groomed them lead their own groups in the future.

The workshops were usually six hours long. For the first 45 minutes, we'd have the whole group together for a warm-up/ice-breaker. Then we'd break into groups of about 10-12 kids and a leader. There would always be a group of teachers who would also do a show! At the end of the day, all the groups would do a short performance. The plays were very short and usually funny. They included improv scenes, AB dialogues done in different ways... Each leader had a different approach. It was very important to create a trusting atmosphere.

Usually we had about 40-60 children and about 10-15 teachers. Each drama day needed about 6-7 leaders, depending on the size of the group. We liked to have one leader for every ten children. Most of the leaders were part of the ELT Drama Network and the Slovak Drama SIG, most frequently a core of six university students who founded BELTS. Often teaching assistants shadowed the more experienced drama teachers or they worked in pairs.

An important aspect of the Drama Days was that the expectations of the experience were focused on language acquisition, not theater. The reason the children came was to improve their English, so they didn't feel the pressure to create impressive artistic performances. This allowed everyone to focus on the process and kept the atmosphere playful and positive. And in

the end, the short performances were often good, reflecting the joy and authenticity felt by both the children and the leaders.

Drama Days had positive results in many areas. In terms of training, they gave less experienced drama leaders a chance to lead a group with a partner or just to be a participant. They also gave members management skills: each Drama Day was organized locally, and members of the ELT Drama Network oversaw fundraising, organizing participants and teachers, publicity, and all aspects of production. They often found sponsors to provide small gifts for the children and the drama leaders (who ran the workshops as volunteers). They greatly strengthened the network. Members came to each other's events to support them, often as participants or drama leaders. Participants developed regional networks, bringing in new people, but also strengthening the commitment of the members of the ELT Drama Network. They helped us keep in touch with the Slovak Drama SIG, who often crossed the border to volunteer as drama leaders. And it had a very positive effect on the atmosphere of the network. Drama teachers often worked in pairs, and more experienced drama leaders worked with less experienced ones as co-teachers. It spread enthusiasm both inside and outside the network. And nothing can give a group more satisfaction than the sound of hearty applause at the end of a long but satisfying day. Here is one of the teachers' reflections:

"I remember when I took my students to Prague from Ostrava for a drama workshop with Leah, they created a show in a day. On the way home, the students were so chatty. They started to chat with foreigners who were on the train - including one girl who had been such an introvert! Drama should be obligatory at every university course for future teachers. I think they would understand children more. That definitely happened to me."³⁸

And finally, the students loved it. In a survey of participants in a Drama Day in Jablonec nad Nisou, all 35 said they would like to participate in another Drama Day. They liked "the way we worked - improvisation on a given theme, not memorizing texts".

Initially the main drama leaders were people with experience - university students from BELTS (Silvie El Helo, Barbara Lucká, Martin Dinga, Peter Bednar, Ivan Lacko), university lecturers from Nitra (Conrad Toft, Andrea Sabová Billíková), and the more experienced theatre practitioners in the *ELT Drama Network* (Leah Gaffen, David Fisher, Dominika Adamová). Over time, other members of the ELT Network started leading and co-leading sessions, including Michaela Nováčková, Lucie Podroužková, Martina Popadučková, Ondřej Adánek, Hana Dušková, Ivana Farkáčová, Martina Kozáková, Maša Pešková, Renata Papoušková, Galina Šedivá, Lida Havriljuková, Jana Procházková, Martina Popadučková, Ondřej Adánek and others.

³⁸ Silvia Doláková from an interview made for the purposes of this thesis, April 2021.

4.7. The Participants

One of the reasons the project was so successful was the group - highly motivated, dedicated educators and inspirational leaders. There were 40 teachers involved and about 30 of them were very active throughout the project. Some had participated in the Class Acts Teacher Network. Others came to us through the Creative Dramatics Association, which distributed information about the project to its members. We also had several university students from West Bohemia University in Plzeň and the aforementioned Bratislava students.

4.7.1. Who were they?

The group fell into five categories (some overlap):

- **Experienced drama teachers:** These included teachers from the Class Acts Teacher Network and others who had done drama on their own or in Czech
- **British Council Teacher Trainers** - members of the network that was described above. We had ten people who were in this group.
- **University ELT teachers:** These teachers were from several universities: Masaryk University, Palacký University Olomouc, University of Hradec Králové, University of West Bohemia in Plzeň, the Janáček Academy of Performing Arts (JAMU) and Silesian University in Opava). The involvement of the university teachers led to research in the field - two wrote their doctoral theses based on their work in drama, others published articles. (described further in Chapter 5).
- **University students:** I led a drama project with students from English Department at the Faculty of Education, West Bohemia University from 1998-1999. Two students from that group joined this project, as well as the aforementioned Bratislava university students.
- **Slovak Drama SIG members** - We had five Slovaks whose participation was funded by the British Council - Slovakia. This group was very active, bringing experience, expertise and enthusiasm. One of them was Mária Vargová from the Faculty of Education at the University of Prešov who had extensive experience with drama and English teaching. We also had several university students from the University of Comenius In Bratislava who had founded BELTS, described above. Their participation greatly strengthened the project and also built on the international network that contributed greatly to our workshops, conferences, Drama Days.

4.7.2. Projects that teachers organized

As the program progressed, the participants' skills in drama increased. In the first year, they developed their own lesson plans for the Dramalogue as described above. The next year they chose and developed their own projects, often in teams. These fell into several categories.

Drama lessons for English teachers

Drawing on their experience from the previous year, many of the teachers developed drama lessons for their classrooms. Six high school teachers worked together to create a series of ELT lesson plans. They wrote the plans individually on slightly different topics (literature, British history, war themes). Then they piloted all of the lessons in their own classrooms, so that each teacher had several drama lessons for their students, not just the one that they had written. The lessons were also tested on different groups, and they gave each other feedback on how the lessons had worked in different classes.

Courses for university students

Three participants designed and piloted year-long university courses on drama and English teaching for education students at the University of Hradec Králové, Masaryk University, and Palacký University in Olomouc. The courses were slightly different, but their goals were similar: to show students of English education how to use drama effectively in a foreign language classroom. The course titles were: “New Directions in ELT”, “Literature and Drama”, “Drama in English Lessons” (developed by Šárka Bendová Dohnalová, Lucie Podroužková, Milena Vodičková, Věra Šprunglová, Pavla Fejfarová).

Teacher training workshops

Several participants conducted drama-based teacher training workshops for English teachers in their regions. Hana Dušková and Pavla Fejfarová developed and led an introductory course for teachers at the Hradec Králové Pedagogical Center; Lida Havriljuková led a summer school in Plzeň that integrated drama and invited some teachers from the ELT Drama Network to teach.

English theatre productions

We also had several participants working on theatre-in-education projects - i.e. shows in English for school children. Šárka Bendová Dohnalová, who taught English to drama education students at JAMU created a touring performance based on the Christmas Carol lesson plan that she developed during the ELT Drama Network. This was presented at schools and theatres around the country. David Fisher, who was a part of the ELT Drama Network, ran the Bear Educational Project - a professional ELT educational theatre group. Several network members helped David develop scripts and teacher materials for the project, and a few joined his company as actors. Many hosted his performances at their schools and some even performed with his project.

Other projects

As I mentioned earlier, many of the participants also organized and led **Drama Days** in their regions, presented their work at **ATECR conferences**, wrote articles for the ATECR newsletter, and used drama in their regular classes. Two network members created a **website** at a time when websites were just beginning to be created on a wide-spread basis. Our site included a description of EDEN, a calendar of events, national and international contacts.

4.7.3. Feedback

In an article for the ATECR newsletter in 2000, Renata Papoušková and Tomáš Dohnal, two participants in the project, wrote: *“Techniques of drama facilitate ... engage many aspects of students’ awareness and intelligence. Basically, students learn by doing things, living them, not just reading, repeating, writing or listening to them. Drama brings life into the classroom and with it comes feelings, emotions, personal values and other parts of students’ personalities. Jonothan Neelands, a well-known drama specialist from the UK, has invented a fitting phrase: ‘learning by imagined reality.’”*³⁹

Eva Duspivová, an English teacher at Gymnázium Vimperk and author of the Richard Cory lesson, wrote about her experience in the *ELT Drama Network* for the ATECR newsletter in 2000:

*“Because I had had no drama experience before [I joined the course], I was rather worried for the first time, not knowing whether I wouldn’t be asked to act in front of my colleagues. Nothing like that happened. Our trainers knew how to create a friendly atmosphere... on Fridays we shook off everything stressful and started ‘to play’. .. We progressed from simple drama activities and finally we were able to prepare, test and present our individual projects. These projects were not to produce English Theatre, but rather ELT lessons for the classroom based on drama. ... Because our work developed step by step, our confidence could build up gradually. We spent five weekends working hard and having fun at the same time, so involved in the activities that we didn’t have time to feel self-conscious.”*⁴⁰

Eva also outlined how her students benefited from using drama techniques:

- *They feel more self-confident when they get into a role, and they are happy to talk in a relaxed way*
- *They “rediscover” their creativity, which is often needed in life and very often suppressed in the traditional Czech school system*
- *They are introduced to more serious topics (literature, history) in a more interesting way, experiencing emotions hidden in poetry and able to communicate their feelings and empathize with others*
- *They have come to understand that we learn a language to communicate, which is not the same as to master vocabulary and grammar.*⁴¹

³⁹ PAPOUŠKOVÁ, Renata and DOHNAL, Tomáš. “A Course on Drama for ELT Teachers - Thanks to the British Council”. Prague: ATECR Newsletter, Vol. 11, No. 3, Winter 2000, p. 29.

⁴⁰ DUSPIVOVÁ, Eva. “ELT Drama Network, A Czech Drama Enthusiast’s Personal Experience.” Prague: ATECR Newsletter, Vol 11, No. 3, Winter 2000, p. 27.

⁴¹ Ibid.

4.8 Management

We also spent a lot of time in **management meetings** deciding how to make the project sustainable, as I described in the first part of this chapter (4.1.4.).

We struggled to decide what our post-BC structure should look like. In the end, we created the English Drama Education Network (EDEN), a special interest group under the umbrella of the Association of English Teachers in the Czech Republic (ATECR). I explained this decision in the British Council journal *Perspectives* in 2001, *“It seemed that collaboration with the ATECR would be mutually beneficial. We will be able to publicize our activities and experience to all members of the association through regular articles in the newsletter and participation in conferences. ATECR will gain members and expand its base of activities.”*⁴²

We elected a steering committee to oversee activities: Dominika Adamová, Máša Pešková, Eva Duspivová, David Fisher, Lucie Podroužková and Pavla Fejfarová. We planned upcoming activities, such as regional Drama Days, teacher seminars, presentations at conferences. We also put some of our lesson plans up on our newly-created website.

We also chose to call our new organization EDEN - the English Drama Education Network. Our mission statement was published on our website and also in the British Council *Perspectives* journal:

*“The purpose of EDEN is to introduce and promote the use of drama in English language teaching in the Czech Republic in order to make the learning process more enjoyable and effective. We believe that the increased use of drama in ELT will raise motivation levels and will contribute to the personal development of both teachers and learners by developing their communication skills and enhancing their creativity.”*⁴³

In 2001, Malcolm Griffiths from the British Council wrote an article for the ATECR newsletter describing his perspective on post-British Council future of the drama project: *“Almost a year ago I had the great pleasure to attend a workshop of a newly-formed network of teachers interested in using Drama in ELT. I was greatly struck by the commitment and enthusiasm of all of the members ... and it was obvious that something important was happening! ... Now, EDEN has become a special interest group of the ATECR. At the British Council, we are very pleased that we were able to help in such an exciting venture.”*⁴⁴

4.9. English Drama Conferences

The most important activities of EDEN (formerly known as the *ELT Drama Network*) were the international conferences organized in 2002 and 2003. The conferences provided an

⁴² GAFFEN, Leah. “From the British Council to EDEN.” *Perspectives: A Journal of English language Teaching and British Studies*, Prague: The British Council, Autumn, 2001. p. 43.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ GRIFFITHS, Malcolm. “News from the British Council.” Prague: Association of English Teachers in the Czech Republic Newsletter. Vol 12, Summer-Autumn 2001. p. 30.

opportunity for EDEN members to present their own work and to attract new people. They were supported by the British Council, ELT publishers who presented their books at the conferences (Fraus, Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press), which kept the cost of participation low. The conferences were also accredited by the Ministry of Education, which allowed teachers to apply for funding from their schools.

Both took place at JAMU, the Janáček Academy of Performing Arts. This was facilitated by one of our members, Šárka Bendová Dohnalová, who taught English at JAMU, and supported by Silva Macková, Radka Macková from the drama education department.

The conference strengthened international cooperation. Colleagues from the Slovak Drama SIG presented their research, including Conrad Toft and Andrea Sabová Billíková who brought the latest installment of their fairy tale lessons. Drama educators from Austria presented their work with ELT at the conference, including Karl Eigenbauer from Vienna, who started working on a regular basis with several ELT Drama Network members based in Brno. (more in Chapter 5). In 2003 we invited Emelie Fitzgibbon, the founder and artistic director of the Graffiti Theatre in Cork, Ireland. Her theatre company focuses on using drama to introduce children to the Irish language, which they are trying to revitalize. She also led a workshop on to use drama to support underprivileged children. In 2004 she returned to the Czech Republic to consult with us on the development of a drama project to promote multicultural issues in the ELT classroom.

The conference was well attended and introduced us to new Czech teachers of English interested in the topic, many of whom had met us at Drama Days. Most of the participants were from Moravia, but Bára Dočkalová was also there. At the time, she was a student at the Faculty of Education at Charles University and was interested in drama. Bára went on to create one of the most comprehensive English drama training programs and is now one of the most active people in the field in the Czech Republic. In an interview I conducted with Bára for this thesis, she told me how the conference influenced her:

“The conference at JAMU was a moment when I got a lot of inspiration. I saw how other teachers used drama for English teaching. I was especially interested in Conrad Toft’s presentation on Cinderella, which showed me how to use drama principles in an elementary school classroom, and David Fisher showed me the Teacher in Role technique. The acting classes that I had taken in the USA had introduced me to some drama methods, but when I came to the conference, I saw really good examples of how to apply drama to regular English classes. I realized that there was a lot more to explore.”⁴⁵

It also led to my own professional and personal friendship with Bára, with whom I have worked extensively with my current children’s theatre group. You can read more about Bára’s early encounters with drama at the Charles University Pedagogical Faculty in Chapter 6.

⁴⁵ Interview with Bára Dočkalová conducted in April 2021 for this thesis.

4.10. EDEN into the 2000s

EDEN continued to carry out some projects after 2003. Drama Days took place on a regional level and members participated in several international conferences held in Slovakia in the 2000s.

The last EDEN project was a symposium in 2004 called "Promoting Intercultural Understanding in the English Classroom through Drama". It was funded by the British Council and we carried out the project in partnership with the People in Need Foundation. Some of the drama teachers involved were Radka Svobodová and Emelie Fitzgibbon from Graffiti Theatre in Ireland. Many EDEN members participated, including colleagues from Slovakia. However, there was no one with the capacity to develop the project further.

EDEN lacked a strong organizational and administrative structure. There was no paid administrative team and it was difficult to maintain regular meetings and communication. The partnership with ATECR was helpful in terms of contacts and communication, but not in terms of administration. They were staffed entirely by volunteers and had no additional capacity to help us write grants and raise money.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the 1998-2003 teacher training projects had a very strong impact on the individuals and, ultimately, on many of the institutions in which they worked. In the next chapter, we will explore this in more detail by tracing the paths of several specific individuals involved in the projects.

Chapter 5: Where are the participants today?

In the spring of 2021, I interviewed many teachers who had been a part of the ELT Drama Network and the Class Acts Network for this thesis.

I wanted to find out how drama had influenced their approach to teaching and their professional development. I also wanted to know if they think the status of drama in ELT in the Czech Republic has changed since we started so many years ago.

Below you can read the reflections of eight people whose careers have been strongly influenced by the projects described in the previous chapters. Most of them encountered drama for the first time in our projects.

5.1. Masaryk University English department

Šárka Dohnalová, Lucie Podroužková and Nad'a Vojtková brought drama to the English Department of the Faculty of Education at Masaryk University. None of them were teaching there during the run of our project, but all of them joined the department in the mid-2000s.

The English Department at MU currently offers 3-4 drama courses a year, as well as a storytelling program that is also related to their research on children's literature.

I led a group interview with them on Zoom in May 2021, and I visited the university in October 2021 to speak in more detail with Šárka Dohnalová.

5.1.1. Šárka (Bendová) Dohnalová

Šárka joined the ELT Drama Network in 1999. At the time, she was teaching English at the Janáček Academy of Performing Arts in Brno (JAMU).

She spoke at length about how she was inspired by the concept of structuring drama work, which she first experienced in Radka Svobodová's lesson in 1999. *"When I saw Radka's drama lesson based on Schiller's play, it was so powerful. Radka came with what I needed."*

Šárka realized that in an English classroom, it could help her students learn to speak effectively in a natural way: *"When I saw the technique Alley of Conscience, so many things came together. We were standing there, giving [the protagonist] advice in the form of 'If I were you...'. It was so natural to give advice, so clear. I realized that this was a way of teaching difficult grammar that I had had problems teaching."*

Radka's lesson showed her what drama could do - teach people to communicate and also to empathize with the characters. *"It wasn't about memorizing scripts, but understanding, experiencing."*

At the time of the ELT Drama Network, Šárka was teaching English to drama education students at JAMU. With the help of Radka and others in the ELT Drama Network, including David Fisher, she created two interactive educational theatre performances with her students based on *Romeo and Juliet* and the *Christmas Carol*. She took this on tour to local high schools and ATECR conferences, as well as performing at Polárka Theatre in Brno.

In 2006, several years after our drama project ended, Šárka started teaching in the English Department of the Faculty of Education at Masaryk University.

She initiated several new courses incorporating the principles of drama, trying to recreate her own inspiring experience during the *ELT Drama Network*. Two of her former students, Tomáš Andrašík and Lucie Moravčíková, now teach for the English department run their own drama courses.

Šárka continues to work with Radka, who often teaches short-term intensive courses at Masaryk University and they collaborate on international projects. Šárka has organized a number of European conferences on ELT and drama education. In 2010, she and Radka organized a one-week intensive drama course with Karl Eigenbauer, a drama teacher from Austria who she met at the EDEN Festival in 2003.

One of her initiatives at the English department of Masaryk University was to introduce drama to the 5-day orientation course for all entering students. *“We spend five days together, and the course is based on Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences. Teachers from the faculty all lead a session. Tomáš [Andrašík] or I do structured drama - 90 minute sessions. This is the students’ first exposure to drama. After that experience, students can choose if they want to take more drama classes.”*

Drama is also a crucial element in intensive courses which the department organizes twice a year at a teaching center outside of Brno (in the town of Fryšták). Every year the department chooses a different theme (the American Wild West, Harry Potter, Treasure Island, Alice in Wonderland).

Šárka also created interdepartmental projects that use drama, including one focused on students with special needs. She has worked with faculty members outside of the English department who specialize in drama, including Tomáš Doležal, Lenka Poláková, and Marie Pavlovská from the Department of Special Education.

5.1.2. Lucie Podroužková

During the time of the *ELT Drama Network*, Lucie taught British and American literature at Silesian University in Opava. In our interview, she described why she initially applied:

“I started the course accidentally. I had just started teaching at Silesian University in Opava, and my boss decided that I should represent them at this new British Council course - it was a drama course, and I was teaching drama. Of course, I was teaching drama as literature - not

drama education. It was frightening for me - I was an introvert. I had never done drama. But then at the ELT Drama course in Šlapanice, I learned how drama can link subjects so naturally.

Lucie started using drama techniques in her literature courses, piloting a one-year course at Silesian University. *“I started using drama a lot. I taught a drama course at Opava, and I organized several Drama Days at Silesian University.”*

“Both literature and drama center around storytelling and so they inspire each other. Drama often borrows themes from literature, and as a literature teacher, I borrow drama techniques to bring literature alive, to turn literature into an experience.

She started teaching at the Department of English in the Faculty of Education at Masaryk University in 2001 and started a drama course. *“I use a lot of the storytelling techniques that I learned in the ELT Drama Network: sculpting, role plays, a day in the life, miming, still pictures, voices in the head. It is very natural, especially for people studying to be teachers.*

“For me, in fact, drama was the first encounter with experiential learning.”

5.1.3. Naďa Vojtková

In the 1990s, Naďa Vojtková was one of the most active members of the British Council Teacher Training Network (described in 4.4.1). She specialized in teaching methodology to English teachers. In 1999, I asked her to come to the *ELT Drama Network* and help our participants with their drama lesson plans for the English classroom (these eventually became part of the *Dramalogue*). She was intrigued by the drama methods. This is how she describes the experience:

“It happened in the opposite way - I was there to teach, but in fact, I learned about drama from the seminars, from the other teachers and the students. It was my first encounter with drama, and it was exactly what I wanted to do. So I joined the course as a participant.”

Naďa was teaching at a gymnázium at the time. *“I was eager to use all of those wonderful ideas in my lessons. I saw drama as a powerful tool. I wanted drama to be the primary activity and English as the means of communication. .. I organized drama days and invited other members of EDEN to lead the sessions so that could happen. Students were so excited. They told me ‘I really didn’t know I could communicate in English. I lost all my barriers.’”*

In 2005 Naďa started teaching in the English Department of the Faculty of Education at Masaryk University, joining Šárka and Lucie in their efforts to promote drama to the students. Naďa thought about how she could use drama when teaching methodology. *“I started with children’s picture books - I thought for lower primary teachers the children’s books could help with real communication. Drama was natural when reading children’s books.”*

This method worked best with students training to be elementary school teachers. *“Some of them were so brilliant. One of them used only children’s books for teaching English. This showed me it really works if the children are led properly. There could be more of this. Teaching English using books like “We’re Going on a Bear Hunt” – the results after two months of teaching English this way is better than a course book.”*

She created two different courses called *Using Authentic Literature in English Classes* which integrated the drama methods from the ELT Drama Network. It was optional for the students in the upper-elementary school program (grades 6-9), and part of the regular syllabus for students in the lower-primary track (grades 1-5).

Many of her students have written MA theses on drama, exploring how using stories and drama benefit their English skills as well as their personal development. One of her former students is now the deputy head of a school with a curriculum completely based on drama.

5.1.4. Drama and ELT at Masaryk University today

Thanks to Naďa, Lucie and Šárka, many students encountered drama at the Department of English at the Faculty of Education at Masaryk University. Is it a central part of the department’s approach to training teachers?

Šárka doesn’t think so.

“The situation feels similar to the 90s – enthusiastic individuals. Teachers ask me ‘how many hours will the lesson take up?’ In order to do drama well, you have to be willing to dedicate the time. And it also takes a long time to write a drama lesson.”

Lucie agreed, noting that the school system is still too rigid.

“When my students graduate, if they want to use drama, they need to find a school willing to let them do it. The educational system is not set up in a way that you can easily use drama in the English classroom.”

Naďa added that the students who were most interested in using picture books and drama usually went on to teach at alternative schools, as they didn’t fit into the mainstream system.

They agree that it is not a widely-used method of English teachers, although the status of drama has changed. *“Today people are much more aware of drama,” noted Lucie. “When we started it was totally new - no one was using drama in the classroom except people doing it as a separate class. It’s gotten more into the consciousness. I also use drama when teaching children at summer camps. In that context, drama has become more common, as camps are usually story-based.”*

But she still doesn’t think it is on the radar of most English teachers. *“I hear English teachers say ‘I know the drama games in Czech. But it had never occurred to me to use it for English*

lessons.' It's a pity teachers still don't realize its potential as a cross-curricular/integrated curriculum tool."

In 2012, I got the chance to work with Naďa, Šárka and Lucie again. We created a project called Storybridge and Masaryk University Faculty of Education was one of our partners. Naďa, Šárka and Lucie led sessions to show elementary school teachers how to work with new collection of English children's books at the Korunni Municipal Library in Prague. Many of their activities drew from the drama education techniques that they first encountered in 1999.

5.2. PhD dissertations

Pavla Fejfarová and Milena Vodičová were both teaching in English departments of Faculties of Education faculties when they participated in the ELT Drama Network. They later wrote their dissertations based on the work that they developed with us.

5.2.1. Pavla Fejfarová

When she joined the ELT Drama Network in 1999, Pavla was teaching English at the Faculty of Education in Hradec Králové. Over the next two years, she became one of the most active members of the network, organizing drama days and presenting her drama lessons at conferences. At a recent interview for this thesis, she described her feelings during the time of the project:

"I loved it and it changed me. I realized drama was an effective tool for any teacher. It was about feeling comfortable. Before Šlapanice, drama was about doing a show. Once you see how it works, it is different."

During the *ELT Drama Network*, she developed a lesson plan based on *Sense and Sensibility* by Jane Austin. This was published in the *Dramalogue* (see Chapter 4.3). Several years later, she used the lesson as the core material for her research for her dissertation.. She tested the efficacy of the lesson in teaching English grammar to her students using drama techniques including: day in life, still pictures, narrated pantomime, diary, character on the wall, conscious alley, hot seating, puppet/object, spectrum of difference.

Her research showed that students learned grammar effectively through drama and that the strategies of drama education enhanced language teaching. The students also appreciated the approach. *"I anticipated they wouldn't think it was effective and they would see the changes. I was happy to get positive reactions."* Her advisor was Hana Kasíková, a widely-published and well-known Czech drama specialist.

Pavla thinks that drama is still a fringe method in English teaching: *"At present, drama education in the field of English is still dealt with in our country by a relatively small number of experts. The faculties of education and the field of English mostly include drama education in the form of one-semester subjects."*

Pavla now runs a language school in Hradec Králové and continues to incorporate drama in her teaching. She finds that it especially helps children who struggle with dyslexia and other learning problems, as they can hide behind roles.

“Unimportant characters can be played by someone in the class who likes to talk a lot, the important role can be played by someone who doesn’t speak (e.g. king only says a few words). That lets the less confident kids grow. Then maybe they try more in English and feel better about themselves. I see it from teachers of university and also kids at language school. In language school, there is no pressure for tests which you have in elementary school. “I can join things with English and drama and fun which gives the children courage and excitement.”

Pavla also leads further education seminars for teachers in her district. She does workshops on grammar that incorporate drama, or calls the seminars storytelling, communication. She usually doesn’t call it drama, as she still does not think it is a method that most people recognize as important and effective. Publishing companies understand the value of her approach –Oxford University Press regularly hires her to promote their storybooks. She has developed drama lessons based on *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, *Jack and the Beanstalk* and other stories.

She doesn’t think that short-term teacher training classes are effective.

“When I teach shorter seminars, teachers like drama but I don’t think they use it much. Longer courses work, like the model of the ELT Drama Workshop where you have six sessions and a project at the end, plus it’s even better if there is a chance to continue afterwards.”

5.2.2. Milena Vodičková

Milena Vodičková taught literature in the English department of the Faculty of Education at Palacký University in Olomouc when she was participating in the ELT Drama Network. While she was very knowledgeable about English literature and theatre history, she had never encountered drama education.

During the ELT Drama Network, she wrote a lesson plan based on *Romeo and Juliet* which was published in the *Dramalogue*.

Like Pavla, Milena wrote a dissertation several years later inspired by the experience. She researched how drama affected her students’ engagement and understanding of English literature. She tested two drama lessons from the Drama in ELT course. One of them was her lesson plan based on *Romeo and Juliet*, and the second was based on a lesson by one of the trainers, Mária Vargová, who led a structured drama about racism using the poem *White Wedding*.

Milena concluded that the drama had a very positive effect on the students. Students found it easier to understand the themes of the play and poem. They used English more frequently and could better empathize with the characters in the pieces. The disadvantage was that a drama

lesson required much more class time. In a normal lesson she could cover the interpretation of a play in one seminar, but when using a structured drama, she needed two.

While drama in a foreign language can lead to a better teaching process, few English teachers have enough experience it. They lack both the training and confidence in drama. She concluded that are not enough opportunities for teachers to get that training.

Milena is now retired. When I asked her if someone in the English department of the faculty is using drama, she wasn't sure, but said that it is not a priority of the department.

5.3. Silvie Doláková

“I was so narrow minded before I did the drama course. When I joined it, I started to think about things in a broader sense. I definitely became a better teacher. I joined the course to improve my English. But then I gained so much more. I got some sort of confidence... I felt like I was succeeding.”

When Silvie joined the ELT Drama Network in 1999, she was a shy, tentative primary school teacher. She joined the course mainly because she wanted to improve her English. In our interview, Silvie spoke about her memories of the ELT Drama Network and how it affected her career path:

“I remember my feeling at the first meeting- I felt very embarrassed because of my English. I didn't want to open my mouth. And I suddenly realized that I didn't mind - it didn't matter how bad my English was. I just wanted to express myself.

“Once I took my students to Prague from Ostrava for a Drama Day workshop with Leah, they created a show in a day. On the way home, the students were so chatty. They started to chat with foreigners who were on the train - including one girl who had been such an introvert! Drama should be obligatory at every university course for future teachers. I think they would understand children more. That definitely happened to me.

“Šlapanice helped to ignite me.”

In the early 2000s, she studied in the English department of Masaryk University, learning from some of her former colleagues from the *ELT Drama Network*. Silvie gained more ideas about the use of storytelling and drama.

Afterwards, she used that knowledge and created a very popular series of books for English teachers. It is called Story-based teaching project, and it consists of 18 volumes that use chants, repetition, and other activities to help children learn English using well-known stories.

“So now I share what I got a chance to discover - the experience, the techniques that people don't know, the psychological impact.”

In 2017 she received the Pearson ELT Teachers Award for best innovation for the publication. She has presented at conferences around the world, as well as working as an ELT consultant for the British Council.

5.4. David Fisher

David Fisher moved to Prague from the UK in 1990 to “try a bit of teaching.”⁴⁶ He had a background in amateur theatre, and he started the Bear Educational Theatre in 1996 with a production of *The Bear* by Chekhov because he thought it could help students learn English. To this day, the company produces interactive shows for students learning English, and David takes the show on tour to schools around Europe.

David first got involved with teacher training projects as a volunteer for the Class Acts Theatre Festivals. He later became a part of the ELT Drama Network, participating in seminars and offering directing advice to teachers. He led Drama Day workshops for students and teachers, and he worked on projects with the Slovak Drama SIG. He also met many drama teachers working in ELT in Europe on his theatre tours. We invited several of them to the 2002 and 2003 EDEN conferences, including Karl Eigenberg from Austria. This resulted in a long-term collaboration between Karl, Šárka Dohnalová and Radka Svobodová (see above). In 2005, David organized a drama conference in tandem with Karl; it got funding from the Austrian government and took place in Šlapanice. Many members of the ELT Drama Network participated.

Several teachers from the Class Acts Teacher Network and the ELT Drama Network worked for the Bear Educational Theatre. Nika Štěpánková, who participated in our festivals, was taking Czech shows to elementary schools. After she met David, she helped him develop an English show called *Magic* for very young learners which they started touring to schools. He later started working with Dominika Adamová, an elementary school teacher who was in the ELT Drama Network. Dominka co-wrote one of the company's most successful plays, *Jackie and the Giant*, which they still perform.

David's work was greatly affected by his experience with the ELT Drama Network. “The British Council project showed me how valuable a teaching resource drama is,” David said. He changed the style of his scripts, incorporating more of the methods he encountered in the course. “This was the ground that *Jackie and the Giant* and other shows grew out of.”

How does he see drama's place in ELT today?

⁴⁶ <https://eltforumsk2014.wordpress.com/2014/05/23/david-fisher-touching-lives-with-theatre/>

“An English lesson can be structured like a drama lesson. Drama empowers people, but most teachers undervalue it. It is still a niche subject. Teachers go through an educational system that rewards passivity. School is there to get you through exams.

“At the most prestigious teacher training courses, like the University of Exeter, there is usually drama thread. It is seen as part of ELT, but not something that everyone should have in their toolbox.”

David thinks this is because drama needs to be experienced, and few teachers have that background.

“Drama doesn’t work in print. ELT is dominated by English book publishers. Drama is not the thing that’s seen as being needed in the English classroom because people haven’t actually done it.”

5.5. Bára Dočkalová

Bára Dočkalová was involved very peripherally with the ELT Drama Network. In the late 1990s, she was a student in the English department of the Faculty of Education at Charles University. She got involved in two play productions directed by a visiting teacher Rebecca Floyd, who later invited her to stay with her family in the USA for a year and study theater. Bára spent a year at Humboldt State University working mostly with Rebecca’s husband John Heckel, a director and drama teacher who had also spent a year as a visiting teacher at the faculty of education at Charles University (his work with the Class Acts Teacher Network is mentioned in Chapter 3, and you can read more about his work at Charles University in the Chapter 6).

In 2002, Bára did her teaching practice for the Faculty of Education, and she was coincidentally assigned to the class of Dominika Adamová at ZŠ Jiřího z Poděbrad. Dominika was a core member of the ELT Drama Network and had also started working at the Bear Educational Theatre with David Fisher. It was the first time Bára had seen a really good English class with the kids on their feet the whole lesson. Dominika invited Bára to see her show, *Jackie and the Giant*, and also to come to the EDEN conference on drama in ELT.

At the conference, Bára saw how theatre could be used in the English classroom. She was particularly inspired by Conrad Toft’s Fairy Tale Lesson plan and David Fisher’s demonstration of the Teacher in Role drama technique. (see Chapter 4).

Today, Bára develops innovative methods for teaching English through drama. She is on the faculty of the English department at the Faculty of Education of Charles University teaching courses on drama and methodology. For nine years, she taught English and drama at ZŠ Marjánka and ran a festival of foreign-language student plays. She has developed materials for a textbook based on her own method of teaching ELT, “Act and Speak,” which she hopes to publish in the near future. She has just started her doctoral studies in drama education at DAMU.

5.6. Accidental encounters with drama

The drama work pursued by our former participants took many different forms: courses in Czech faculties of education, training workshops for teachers, doctoral research, international collaborations, projects with Czech drama educators, developing English textbooks using drama as a method, running summer camps, launching a language school.

It is striking how many of the participants stumbled into drama. Naďa joined because I asked her to do a methodology session, and she discovered drama methods. Silvie wanted to improve her English. Lucie's boss asked her to sign up because he thought the course would be about something completely different. And yet all three of them were very quickly convinced that drama was a valuable method for ELT teaching. Thanks to their accidental encounters, their careers – and probably the careers of some of their students – have taken very different routes.

As David Fisher mentioned, drama needs to be experienced. It's a long-term process, and a one-off workshop will not give someone the necessary background. Unless it is offered more consistently in faculties of education at Czech universities (as Šárka, Lucie and Naďa have managed to do at Masaryk University), future teachers will miss out on the opportunity to have that experience, and ultimately to give it to their own students.

Chapter 6: Drama in English at universities

Earlier in this thesis, I mentioned the BELTS university theatre group in Slovakia. The group was created thanks to the students' British lecturer, Paul Stocks, who integrated theatre into his teaching.

There were also many examples of this in the Czech Republic. This chapter will not present a complete picture of English drama programs at Czech universities. I will describe several projects initiated by foreign lecturers. How did these drama projects inspire some of their students?

The information in this chapter is based on interviews with two Americans, John Heckel and Adam Beck, who taught in the English departments of faculties of education at universities in Prague and Plzeň. I also spoke with two students, Bára Dočkalova and Zuzana Partlová, about their first encounters with drama at university, and how that influenced their careers.

These interviews were conducted in 2021 for the purposes of this thesis. I also write about Rebecca Floyd, John Heckel's wife, who taught at Charles University in the late 1990s after John returned to the US. Unfortunately Rebecca passed away in 2013, and the information about her activities came from John and her former students.

I was affiliated to both John and Adam's work. John conducted workshops for the Class Acts Teacher Network in the 1990s, described in chapters 2 and 3. I did not know Adam, but I ran a drama project with students at West Bohemia University in 1998-96, which was a continuation of the tradition he had started.

There is also a brief mention of the work of John Martlew, a British lecturer who established an English student drama program at the Faculty of Arts at Charles University which continues to this day.

6.1. Charles University

6.1.1. Faculty of Education: John Heckel + Rebecca Floyd

John Heckel was a drama teacher at Humboldt State University (California) and taught at the English Department of the Faculty of Education at Charles University for the 1996-97 academic year. He had previously taught in Poland and was interested in the intersection of drama and English education. Recently, John described the atmosphere at the time, and the challenges of teaching in the department. It has been slightly edited for clarity:

“The Pedagogical faculty had a very definite age/experience split. The older faculty members dominated and controlled most decisions, had all lived and taught under communism for most of

their academic careers, The younger minority faculty group had been educated and started their teaching/working careers post communism. You can imagine the tensions and conflicts that this split caused. I was caught in the middle. I had been invited by the older established control group but was employing teaching techniques (drama) more familiar to the younger group.

“As I remember there was also an attitude towards classes that ran along that same split. There were the important classes, grammar, syntax etc. You can teach these topics with lectures and you can test these courses, versus classes in conversation, American arts, English lit type which were more interactive. Remember that the older group had almost no experience in interactive classes. Under the communist model that kind of personal interaction did not take place. Because of my background (theatre, dramatic analysis, script analysis, acting and directing) I taught the “less important” more interactive classes. They were mostly electives and not the core ‘important’ classes that were required. None of the students had experience in drama, at least that I remember.”

John used drama to elicit original ideas from his students. During his classes, he would create scenes with the students. One of his rules was "no censorship," and he encouraged students to explore their emotions. This could sometimes be challenging when working in a foreign language:

“Part of the value of the use of drama is connected to the idea that a language becomes yours when you can express yourself emotionally in that language. Drama allows that to happen, playing a role, and then making that dialogue yours, finding a way to engage with the emotions of that character or of that situation. It provides you with the experience of emotional expression through a new language. But this makes many people uncomfortable.”

John was involved in many drama and theatre education projects outside of the university. As mentioned in Chapters 2 and 3, he led teacher training workshops at the Class Acts Teacher Network and workshops for children at the Class Acts Theatre Festivals. He also consulted with David Fisher on the Bear Educational Theatre.

After John left, his wife Rebecca continued to teach drama at the faculty, initiating several theatre projects. In her first year, she started an extracurricular English drama group and directed a show of David Mamet scenes. Because it was non-credit, few students participated. The second year she directed another student show, but this time students for academic credit. There was much more interest. The class was set up as a 2-semester course, but Rebecca taught it as a 6-week intensive program. She created a full-length production of *Our Town*, an American classic play by Thornton Wilder. It was a huge production with a large cast, and the students did everything (production work, fundraising, rehearsals...).

John and Rebecca maintained close ties to the Czech Republic after they left. For many years, they kept an apartment in Prague and ran occasional theater projects for English language learners.

6.1.2.1. How did they influence some of their students?

I spoke to two students of Rebecca and John. Both of them are now drama teachers, and they spoke about how their chance to do drama at university had a profound impact on them.

6.1.2.1.1. Bára Dočkalová

Bára Dočkalová, mentioned in the last chapter, studied with both Rebecca and John.

As a child, Bára had loved doing theater with her friends, but she didn't feel she was "right" to be an actor. In 1997, her second year as a student in the English Department of the Faculty of Education, she saw a flier about a new English drama group and decided to join because "drama in English didn't seem as intimidating as Czech drama". She began studying with Rebecca Floyd, who founded the club. Bára loved it: *"Suddenly school made sense. Everything was more colorful, more human. I looked forward to being at the university. The first few years of university were very theoretical - linguistics - and this was the first time there was something practical."*

Through this experience, Bára gained confidence in her acting skills. She joined an acting class taught by Renata Bulvová, who had studied devised theater under the renowned Czech director Ivan Vyskočil at DAMU.

She continued to explore theatre in the English department. Bára played the lead role in Rebecca's production of *Our Town*. The project brought together people from different departments and formed lifelong friendships. Bára began writing scripts in English, which she used in her teaching practice (one of them was the basis for her MA thesis). *"I was studying in the English and the Czech departments. The English department was so much more open - some of the teachers went abroad, worked with foreigners, and they brought that spirit to us."*

In August 2000, Bára went to Humboldt State University and studied dramatic writing, acting, and analysis with John Heckel and other teachers for a year. *"Acting in English, being in the USA, gave me a new sense of identity. Even my name was pronounced differently. 'Dokalohva.'" I discovered I could do things in this different language, and be someone a bit different."* As her final project, she wrote a play with original music. Someone saw Bára after the show and told her how much they had enjoyed her show. The experience gave Bára a new confidence, a realization that even strangers appreciated her original work. Back in Prague, Bára wrote and performed a play in Czech. *"English theatre opened the world of Czech theatre to me."*

Bara completed her master's thesis in 2003 entitled *Drama project with a mixed ability group*, which has been cited in numerous theses. Bára founded *Jeviště*, a private language school where she teaches language through drama. She went back to California three times to co-teach a drama-based English summer course for international students with John Heckel. In 2007 she began teaching at ZŠ Marjánka, developing her own methods which are described in Chapter 5.

In the same year, she found out that the English drama course that Rebecca had started was still officially listed as a course at the Faculty of Education at Charles University, but there was no one to teach it. The head of the faculty agreed to let Bára revive the class. At the end of the course, some students said to Bára: *“This is the first class that makes sense.”*

Through Rebecca’s English drama group that she joined as a student at university, Bára gained the confidence to pursue her dream of acting. Along the way, she discovered so many of her other talents.

Today Bára is one of the most influential people in the field of drama and language teaching in the Czech Republic. She gives many children and future teachers the chance to experience drama, just as she did as a student of Rebecca Floyd and John Heckel.

6.1.2.1.2. Zuzana Pártlová

Zuzana now teaches at DAMU in the Department of Authorial Creativity and Pedagogy. Like Bára, she was a student of Rebecca Floyd at the English Department of the Faculty of Education at Charles University.

Zuzana has always been interested in foreign languages. She had done some theater in high school, but not much.

“The English department was good, sort of conservative, and then suddenly Rebecca Floyd appeared with her long flying hair, snake tattooed on her wrist, huge smile. She was a miracle there in that environment of polite, unobtrusive people.

“I applied for her seminar, Drama in Education. Rebecca was so different, so courageous and open. She had gotten special permission for the course. We could skip obligatory subjects and work on the play. It was freedom. We rehearsed in Karlinské spektrum and then performed in Akcent Theatre. Rebecca gave us lots of confidence, and she helped us believe that we can do it. We produced the show by ourselves. Rebecca picked someone to be assistant director so she could learn a lot. It was a lot about English. We didn’t know how to speak onstage so we improved our performance/presentation. She wasn’t trying to make us actors. We did games and exercises for speech at the beginning to get more fluency and speech. We got the script and were encouraged to find the Czech translation. The tasks we were doing- it was like at DAMU. Students at the pedagogical faculty could be a bit stiff, and she was very warm, really trying to make us work.”

After this experience, Zuzana joined Bára and attended the Renata Bulvová’s acting classes. The following year Zuzana started teaching at a school in Germany. She used drama with her students and also applied for a course in drama education.

“I probably wouldn’t have done that if it hadn’t been for Rebecca. I think I would have dropped out of the pedagogical faculty if I hadn’t met her.”

After Zuzana returned from Germany, she decided to study in the department of Authorial Creativity and Pedagogy at DAMU, where Renata had studied. Zuzana is currently on the faculty of that department.

“I learned so much through exploring drama. Getting to know other people. Getting to know myself.”

6.1.2. Faculty of Arts: John Martlew

I feel like this thesis should include a brief mention of John Martlew, a British teacher who taught literature in the Department of English and American Studies at the Faculty of Arts at Charles University. In 1993, one of his students suggested that instead of talking about Shakespeare, they should act it out. John accepted the challenge, even though he had never directed a show before. It became a tradition that continues to this day. Every year, students from Charles University stage a classic play to give non-native speakers a chance to explore the text through performance. The project is more literary than theatrical, but it has given hundreds of students the opportunity to direct, produce, and see a production come to life.

6.2. West Bohemia University

Adam Beck taught English in Plzeň for two years, and he continued to work with his Czech students from San Francisco. He created a drama tradition in the English department that continued for many years after his departure.

6.2.1. Adam's first projects

Adam Beck was pursuing a master's degree in theater arts at San Francisco State University when he came to Czechoslovakia (later the Czech Republic) as a Peace Corps volunteer in 1992 (see Chapter 1).

Adam had done plays and musicals with children and teens before he came to Plzeň.

“My theatre stuff started because everything I did was theatrical. We had to read, so we did scenes. I brought props, and we did skits. My students took to it so quickly - the culture was so artistic and expressive.

“I set up an extracurricular theatre group and our first show was called “1+4=1.” It was an original theatre piece without language. We explored deeper symbolic ideas through music, sound... My preference was always creating original work.

“The second year, we made a show called Mushrooms: 15 students got involved. This was a bigger piece. We created a language called “mushroom” - connected to fairy tales, nature of culture, humor.”

6.2.2. Reflections: Plzeň Meets San Francisco

After two years in Plzeň, Adam returned to San Francisco to finish his studies. But he wanted to continue working with his Czech theatre students. This led to *Reflections*, an international project that ran during the 1995-96 academic year and involved students at SF State and students from West Bohemia University.

The students from both groups created a show about each other. "At the beginning, I paired Czech and American students. I wanted each to get to know their counterpart. We used audio cassettes, letters - we were sending them back and forth. We dug deep into who these people are. They couldn't see each other physically at the beginning. Each group created a reflection of the other group. In San Francisco, we did a lot of work as an ensemble: improv, theatre games. The Czechs did a lot of that process by themselves because I had worked with them and they trusted each other and me. We worked with material based on the other group. This was a memorable experience for all of us – the sort of experience that I don't think you're going to forget. It's going to stand out in your lifetime, no matter how long you live - it certainly has in mine."

In the end, they performed the show together – the Czechs went to San Francisco and the Americans came to Plzeň thanks to funding from the Open Society Fund and contributions from private donors (including Miloš Forman, to whom Adam wrote on a whim).

In addition to the drama group, Adam taught American literature and methodology and practical English classes. He did not teach a drama course, but he brought drama into his classes.

"I taught a class connected to fairy tales and fables. We would read them, we would do puppet shows, or we would act them out in certain ways. I would bring theatre games into the regular classroom. Those sorts of activities are natural for ELT because you can do role playing, it's very engaging and effective.

"During a retreat in my second year, we split into different groups. There were about twenty students. We were in the countryside. There were big trees, a forest. I made a handout and told the students to invent a fairy tale character. And there were a bunch of questions. First of all, they had to write it out: and they were writing this out in English of course - what do you look like, what's your background.. We were in the forest, they were sitting on rocks, I gave them about thirty minutes to come up with some ideas for their character. And then it was remarkable, we are going to have a fairy tale party, a cocktail party. They were prepared, and then they could improv. And then I said: talk to someone and find out who they are; you are meeting new people. Then they would talk, and I would say mingle, and they would change. It was hilarious, they were so into it, and it was clearly so effective. They were using English and they weren't even thinking about it.

"The students were so receptive to those kinds of dramatic activities."

Adam met with the students 23 years later in Plzeň. Some of them did continue doing theatre in Plzeň, including their technical assistant who ended up becoming quite a successful actor.

“It apparently did have a lot of impact directly in terms of theatre work later in their lives, Some went in different directions, in education and psychology. But it was clear that our experiences together were a very formative part of their youth.”

6.2.2. Continuing Adam’s legacy

Adam had sparked an interest in drama at the university which Kate Spike developed when she began teaching in the Faculty of Education after his departure. She directed several English-language plays and the students performed in local theaters. When Kate left, I supervised a project with her former English students who wanted to start an after-school English drama group. I coached them as they selected and directed their own scenes, which they presented in the spring of 1999.

Two of these students, Ondřej Adámek and Martina Popadučková, joined the ELT Drama Network the following year. They became leaders of the Drama Days, created lesson plans and continued to develop their drama skills and knowledge.

Conclusion

My first English drama projects started in Prague thirty years ago. As I leafed through dusty folders, studied grant applications, thumbed through photo albums, read old scripts, and talked about the project with former participants (teachers, students, former colleagues), I was struck by the level of passion that we all had had for our drama projects.

At every stage, people went above and beyond all expectations to make projects come to life. My gymnázium students spent hours after school and on weekends to rehearse English plays. Teachers in the Class Acts Teacher Network put on shows despite skeptical colleagues and difficult conditions in schools. When we organized Drama Days, some teachers traveled across the country to lead a workshop for free, while others took groups of students by train to join. The university students from Bratislava came to Brno regularly to join the volunteer teaching team. Almost 25 years later, the ELT Drama Network participants' eyes sparkle when they remember the experience of being part of Radka Svobodová's lesson about a Schiller play.

Very early on, it became obvious to me that the drama projects described in this thesis did much, much more than teach language. They touched participants on an emotional level. We laughed together, we were moved together. Drama allowed us to dive deep into stories together, empathizing with characters who taught us something about ourselves. This gave us a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction which was hard to find in other ELT activities.

In 1999, I wrote an article for the British Council Czech newsletter outlining the possible wider uses of drama: *"Beyond language, drama can be used to explore issues that most teenagers do not want to discuss with their teachers. By placing a difficult topic (such as the generation gap or drug abuse) in a fictional context with fictional characters, students can gain a new understanding that might affect their perspective long after the drama has ended."*⁴⁷

This is the power of drama when teaching any subject. The advantage of drama in ELT is that it can attract a much broader base of participants. Students take English classes to practice the language. Along the way, they can learn so much more.

And yet drama is still considered a fringe subject. It is only taught on an ad hoc basis at most English departments at Czech faculties of education, and usually the amount of time devoted to drama is too little to be effective. It certainly is not a priority. Many English teachers still do not believe that students can learn much through drama activities.

Perhaps the potential of drama will be recognized as schools are becoming increasingly focused on students' well-being. A new perspective on the role of the school in teaching wellness and promoting positive mental health could encourage all teachers - not just ELT teachers - to embrace a holistic approach.

⁴⁷ GAFFEN, Leah. English Language Teaching and Drama Education. Prague: The British Council Newsletter, Czech Republic, October-December 1999, p. 2.

How long will it take for Czech schools to finally implement an atmosphere of “leisure, enjoyment and solid progress” recommended by Jan Amos Comenius hundreds of years ago?

Lucie Podroužková, one of the former members of the ELT Drama Network who now teaches at Masaryk University, told me about a recent experience she had in a Brno elementary school: “The other day I was guest teaching, using interactive storytelling and drama. The kids loved it, they always do in fact, and one girl said ‘I want all English lessons to be like this.’ I was delighted, but don’t think it was a compliment for me. She was asking for a change.”

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - List of Publications + Selected Articles

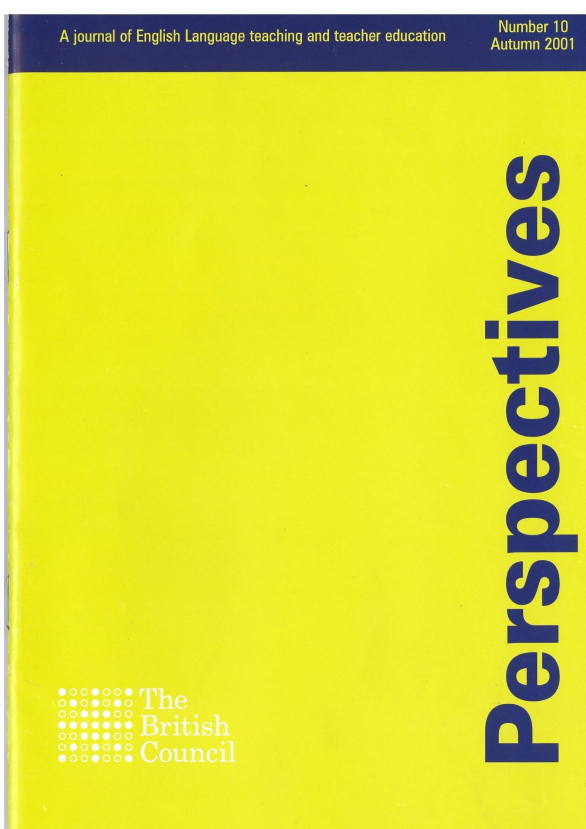
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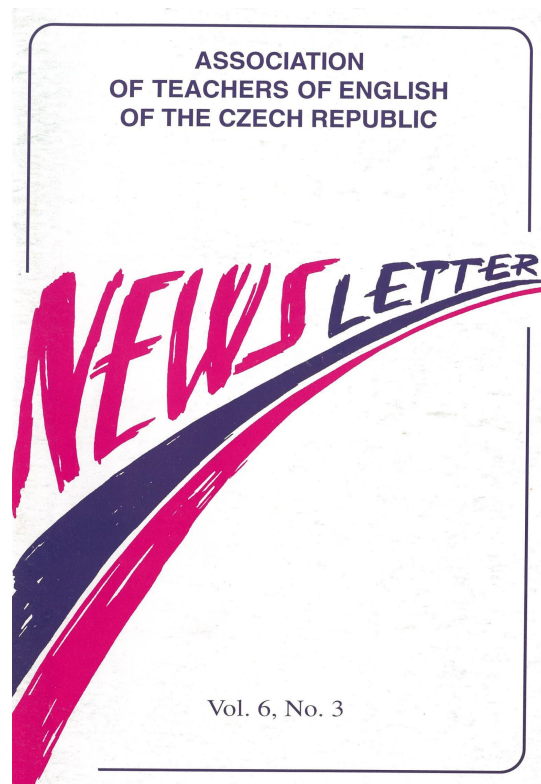
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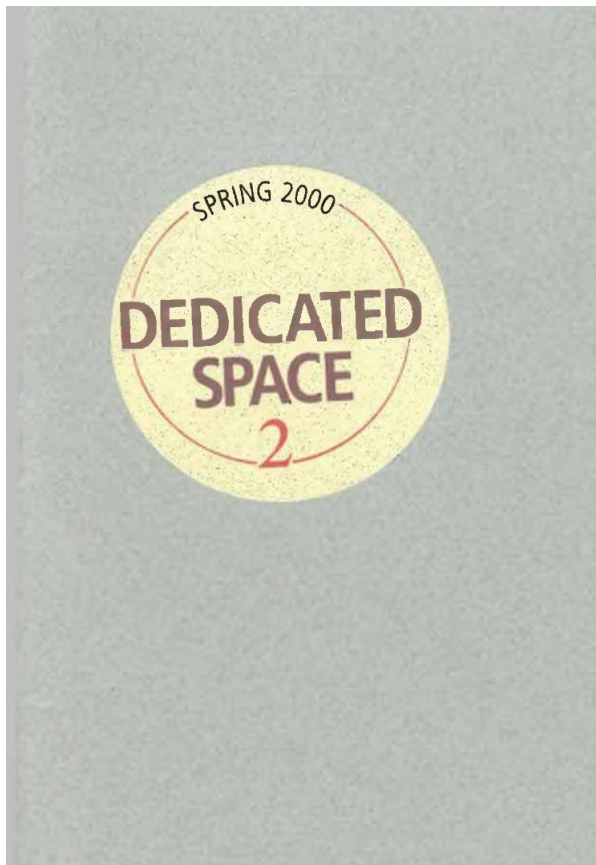


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A journal published by the Faculty of Arts at the University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra and supported by the British Council Slovakia

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Dedicated Space is a journal for those

interested in the use of drama in education and theatre techniques in language teaching and learning at primary, secondary and university levels. Our aims are to provide a forum for ideas, information and news concerning all aspects of the subject, from classroom techniques to performances to teacher training. In particular we would like to explore ways in which drama can be used as a way of thinking about the classroom (as in physical, emotional and intellectual space that is dedicated to learning), about the teacher and the students, about the activities that take place in the lesson and about how the lesson or series of lessons is planned and structured. Above all, we want to explore how drama can help language teaching to achieve, in Gavin Bolton's words, "the change in understanding" which is at the heart of real learning.

Second Issue



Dedicated Space is published by the Faculty of Arts at the University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra in co-operation with the British Council.

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FEATURES
Grammar through
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Communicative Skills
in the EFL Classroom /
Drama for Teacher
Education / An
Interview with Geoff
Fox

Other Slovak publications

- BACOVA, Daniela and PHILLIPS, Tim (eds). *“As if... Drama-based Lesson Plans for English Language Teaching.”* Bratislava: The British Council, 2000, 42 p. ISBN 978-0863554-50-4.
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DIVADLO ve škole

O PROGRAMU CLASS ACTS, FESTIVALU I HONORÁŘÍCH

V ZÁŘÍ 1992 PŘIJELA DO PRAHY UČIT ANGLIČTINU. PŘEDTÍM PŮSOBILA V KENNEDYHO CENTRU DRAMATICKÉHO UMĚNÍ VE WASHINGTONU. PO NEKOLIKA MĚSÍCÍCH VYUKY NA SOUKROMÉ JAZYKOVÉ ŠKOLE ZACALA LEKCE ANGLICKÉ KONVERZACE OKORENOVAT DIVADELNÍMI EXPERIMENTY. ŽÁCI HRÁLI V JEDNODUCHÝCH INSCENACÍCH. UČEBNY SE STALY DIVADLEM, STUDENTI HERCI I DIVÁKY. „NAŠE PŘEDSTAVENÍ MĚLA OHLAS,“ RÍKA LEAH GAFFEN, VEDOUČÍ PROGRAMU CLASS ACTS. „STUDENTI SE NEJEN HRÁVĚ NAUČILI POTREBNÁ SLOVÍČKA, ALE ZISKALI I SEBEVĚDOMÍ A MOTIVACI.“

Úspěch přitahuje, zvláště když pomáhá ostatním být lepší. Jak ale dát šanci dalším studentům? Zvláště, když tu bylo nejen nadšení, ale i ochota věnovat svůj volný čas po škole k nastudování nových divadelních představení v angličtině.

„Navštívila jsem pražské Gymnázium Nad alejí, které má rozšířený dvojjazyčný program. Slovo dalo slovo a já dostala nabídku, abych vytvořila program divadelních představení pro celý školní rok. Hráli jsme opět ve třídě, v rámci vyučování, a večer pak pro rodiče a jejich známé.

Kvalitní výsledek naší práce ocenila Nadace The Open Society Fund a rozhodla se nás podporovat. A tak jsem režirovala krátká divadelní představení v Akademickém gymnáziu v Brně, na pražském Gymnáziu Sladkovského náměstí a pochopitelně v Gymnáziu Nad alejí.“

Odtud byl už jen krůček k programu i k stejnojmennému festivalu Class Acts, které zastřešila anglická profesionální divadelní společnost Misery Loves Company, jež úzce spolupracuje s divadlem Kašpar.

Co může dát program Class Acts učitelům a studentům?

„Především se je aktivně podílet na divadelním představení. Zkušenosti, které při tom získají, nejen zvyšují plynulost vyjadřování v angličtině, ale také posilují schopnost studentů bez obav hovořit cizím jazykem na veřejnosti. Divadelní inscenace je tu vlastně nástrojem, který zlepší slovní zásobu, intonaci, podporuje sebevědomí účastníků. Myslím si, že uvedení metodiky divadelních představení jako mimoškolní aktivity do českých škol vnese do školního prostředí nový pocit přátelství i prvek hravosti. Výchozí dramatika v angličtině se tak může stát přirozenou součástí vzdělávacího procesu, zajímavou a účinnou metodou výuky anglické konverzace. To je ostatně jedním z cílů programu Class Acts.“

Jaké konkrétní akce v jeho rámci připravujete?

„V tomto školním roce chceme ještě více při-

blížit studentům a hlavně učitelům divadlo v angličtině. Proto nabízíme a realizujeme úvodní semináře pro učitele. Jde prakticky o devadesátiminutové setkání, kde se účastníci dozvědí, jak rozvíjet divadelní program v angličtině v podmínkách školy. Třebaže jsou tyto semináře určeny zejména pedagogům z gymnázií, mohou se jich zúčastnit i učitelé ze základních i ostatních středních škol. Semináře se konají průběžně už od září v místních pobočkách Britské rady, a to po celé České republice.

Pro učitele, kteří mají o divadelní představení hlubší zájem a přitom se necítí být připraveni na produkci hry se studenty, organizuje Class Acts vždy jednou za měsíc sérii seminářů pro skupinu patnácti až dvaceti pedagogů. Ta se zabývá výběrem vhodných materiálů, technikou improvizace, produkcí divadelních představení a dalšími zajímavými tématy.

V programu Class Acts počítáme s vytvořením informační sítě pro učitele, kteří spolu se studenty nacvičují krátké hry. Jim pak jsou určena odborná školení, která budou probíhat během doby divadelních zkoušek. Učitelé zapojení do informační sítě obdrží peněžní příspěvek

na připravovanou divadelní inscenaci a malý honorář, který ocení jejich práci.

Kdy bude divadelní festival?

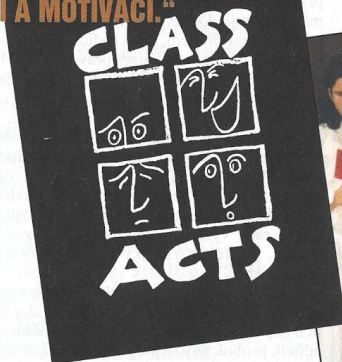
„Počítáme s ním v dubnu 1996. Uskuteční se v Praze. Bude to vlastně druhý ročník Divadelního festivalu Class Acts. Na něm učitelé spolu se studenty předvedou ukázky ze svých představení. Festival uvede profesionální divadelní skupina hrající v angličtině Misery Loves Company.“

Co zajímavého ještě chystáte?

„Byli bychom rádi, kdyby si divadelní představení jako vzdělávací metoda našla cestu k budoucím učitelům. Proto Class Acts ve svém projektu Fast Track organizuje pro studenty pražské pedagogické fakulty i katedry dramatického vzdělávání na DAMU semináře a nabízí jim možnost zúčastnit se divadelních inscenací. Pro studenty, kteří absolvovali loňský program Class Acts, připravujeme celovečerní muzikál. Premiéra se bude konat v Divadle v Celetné. Zároveň chceme, aby byla jakýmsi modelovým představením pro ty školy, které jsou již zařazeny v informační síti Class Acts.“

Připravil Zdeněk Gruša

P. S. Program Class Acts je podporován nadací Open Society Fund, Inc. a spolupracuje s Britskou kulturní radou (British Council), Vzdělávacím centrem, Pedagogickou fakultou a DAMU. Učitelé, kteří mají zájem získat další podrobné informace o programu Class Acts, se mohou obrátit na adresu: Leah Gaffen, Class Acts, katedra produkce DAMU, Karlova 26, 116 65 Praha 1



SCHOOLS & EDUCATION

Gaffen

gets them hooked on drama



MATT CORNIGNE/Prague Post

■ Theater project brings drama education to secondary schools

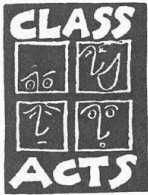
By Peter Smith

A group of teenage students regularly comes to school before 7 a.m. to practice a play based on a Jules Verne novel. They spice it up with songs by everyone from George Gershwin to the Beatles, and they perform it at their school.

Except for the sunrise rehearsal schedule and the homemade script, it sounds like a typical American teenage experience: discovering the terrors and exhilaration of the highschool play.

But such opportunities are unusual for Czech secondary-school students, says Leah Gaffen, an American who has trained teachers and students in producing dramas over the past three years.

"There is strong amateur theater here, but not in the schools," she said. While such theaters often demand a major time commitment, in-school programs let students experiment in a less imposing setting and perhaps discover latent talents.



"It gives them confidence to be on a stage, to sing in front of people," said Gaffen, 28, who founded the group Class Acts Theatre Project to help spread secondary-

school drama education in the Czech Republic. "And it's just really fun. It helps the teachers work with the students in a new way."

Gaffen began using drama in 1993 to hone students' language skills while working as an English instructor at Gymnázium Nad aleji in Prague. By the next year she was teaching drama as a subject in itself there.

She also founded Class Acts in 1994 and began traveling the country, directing school plays and training teachers and students to do the same. More than 400 students and 300 teachers have participated in various training programs, she said. For the past three springs, many of them have traveled from as far as Brno to display the fruits of their efforts at an annual Prague theater festival.

One such student group was from the Střední pedagogická škola in Karlovy Vary (Carlsbad). Students performed their musical adaptation of Jules Verne's *Around the World in 80 Days* at their school and at the 1997 festival in Prague, and they plan more performances to benefit Moravian flood victims.

"They created it on their own," said their teacher, Blanka Dryková. "They were willing to come to school before 7 a.m. [to rehearse]. That was very unusual."

Though the students were talented musicians, many were shy and uncertain of their abilities, Dryková said. "They didn't believe they could manage it, but they managed it."

Gaffen, a native of Arlington, Virginia, brought years of drama experience with her to



COURTESY PHOTO

Thanks to Leah Gaffen (top), Czech high-school performers are getting their first crack at theatrical stardom. The school play or musical is still a rare event here.

Prague. She acted and did organizational work in various drama organizations while attending Yale University.

Gaffen founded Class Acts with help from the British Council, the Prague Theatre Academy, the Misery Loves Company theater group and other organizations. The program was launched with seed money from the Open Society Fund - Prague.

Those start-up grants have now run out, and Gaffen expects she'll leave Prague in a few years to attend graduate school. She's working with teachers to create a permanent organizational structure for Class Acts that would raise money, continue the training programs and sponsor the annual Prague theater festivals.

"In Prague it's not so hard to have an idea and realize an idea, but it's harder to keep it going,"

she said. The transience of the creative talent here and the difficulty of finding continual funding for programs make it all the harder to institutionalize a creative project.

In the first few years of Class Acts, students performed only English-language plays by authors ranging from William Shakespeare to Edward Albee to Neil Simon. But this past school year they also performed Czech-language plays.

"I think doing English-language theater was a way of attracting people who wouldn't do a theater program normally," Gaffen said. "But it didn't really matter if it was in English or Czech or Swahili."

Dryková agrees. "The language wasn't so important" for the students, she said. "This enriched them. It gave them something that can't be taken away from them."



Czech Republic

Drama Education in English Teaching

Teacher Devoured by Wolf

A young beautiful girl named Reddie lives in the Wild Wild West... and she is off to join her True Love. But what happens to him? Lured by the evil Johnny Wolf, he goes to the Wolf Bar and indulges in Demon Whisky!!

Sound familiar? This was one of the interpretations of 'Little Red Riding Hood' that was performed by Czech teachers of English at a summer course for teachers. The six-day course, entitled 'Drama Education in English Teaching' was a pilot programme sponsored by the British Council at the Masaryk Centre for In-Service Teacher Training.

Participants, who were all Czech and Slovak teachers of English, spent a highly intensive week together in Šlapanice near Brno, taking methodology classes in drama education and pronunciation. There was also an inter-disciplinary approach provided by the mixed background of the teaching staff of a consultant in the use of drama in ELT, a teacher from the British Council Prague and a teacher trainer from West Bohemia University as well as three teachers of English from Primary and Secondary schools. The course was an extension of the programme initiated by Class Acts, an organisation founded by Leah Gaffen that promotes drama education in English teaching. The school play is a hallmark of British schools. Throughout the country, British students perform in Christmas pantomimes, Shakespeare festivals, spring musicals, as well as taking drama classes as a part of their curriculum. The situation is markedly different in the Czech Republic. Czech students have an extensive knowledge of theatre history, but rarely do they have the opportunity to create theatre themselves. Drama is also a highly effective tool for promoting confidence and fluency in a foreign language. With the help of the British Council twenty three teachers will bring this methodology back to their schools - and help to spread the tradition of theatre in this country.

Leah Gaffen
Founder and Director of Class Act Programme
also working for Prague Theatre Academy

See page 6 for Class Act Courses

Class Acts: Introducing Theatre to the English Classroom

Leah Gaffen, DAMU Prague. For the past three years, Leah Gaffen has been working in the Czech Republic helping teachers develop English-language theatre programmes at their schools. This workshop will cover a variety of topics including: improvisation techniques and drama exercises that increase students' fluency and confidence in English; creation and production of simple English-language performances and other techniques. The workshop will be directed towards teachers of students between the ages of 11 and 18.



Grandma waiting for Reddie to come home

Appendix 2 - Class Acts Festivals: Lists of participants

First Class Acts Festival, 1995

Gymnázium Nad Alejí	Prague	Little Shop of Horrors - <i>musical theatre</i>	Leah Gaffen
Akademické gymnázium	Brno	The Foreigner - <i>Larry Shue</i>	Leah Gaffen
Sladkovského Gymnázium	Prague	Ernestine's Amazing Imagination - <i>by Alan Ackbourne</i>	Leah Gaffen
Gymnázium Českolipská	Prague	The Sandbox - <i>Edward Albee</i> / The Lesson - <i>Eugene Ionesco</i>	Laura Zam
Gymnázium Nad Alejí	Prague	Lysistrata - <i>Aristophanes</i>	Amery Rock
Gymnázium Slovanské	Olomouc	Mother Figure - <i>by Alan Ackbourne</i> / Black and Silver <i>by Michael Frayn</i>	Ondřej Lukáš

Second Annual Class Acts Festival, 1996

Gymnázium Františka Křižíka	Plzeň	Jack and the Beanstalk <i>by Carolyn Graham</i>	Michaela Nováčková
Gymnázium Nad Alejí	Prague	A Midsummer Night's Dream - <i>adapted by Amery Rock</i>	Amery Rock
Gymnázium Nad Alejí	Prague	Macbeth - <i>adapted by Amery Rock</i>	Amery Rock
Gymnázium Nad Alejí	Prague	Visit to a Small Planet - <i>by Gore Vidal</i>	Eoin Dubsky (student)
Gymnázium Hejčín	Olomouc	Able Caine and Caned Able - <i>by Kumar Višwanathan and Hana Mádrova</i>	Kumar Višwanathan and Hana Mádrova
ZŠ UNESCO	Uherské Hradiště	Where the Wild Things Are- <i>devised by ensemble</i>	Ann Marie Schultz
Obchodní akademie	Karlovy Vary	Hope in a Bottle - <i>by Chris Martin</i>	Chris Martin
Soukromé jazkové gymnázium	Hradec Králové	The Unicorn in the Garden - <i>by James Thurber</i>	Pavel Smítka

Third Annual Class Acts Festival, 1997

English productions			
Gymnázium Aš	Aš	Project "Z" - <i>devised by ensemble</i>	Roman Černík, Weldon Robinson
Soukromá mateřská a základní škola DOMINO	Brno	Paper Planet - <i>original show by ensemble</i>	Nika Štěpánková, M. Brustlová
ZŠ Majakovského	Prostějov	Chicken Little- <i>Carolyn Graham</i>	Jana Procházková
Gymnázium Františka Křižíka	Plzeň	The Three Billy Goats Gruff <i>by Carolyn Graham</i>	Michaela Nováčková
Gymnázium Františka Křižíka	Plzeň	The Waiting Room <i>by Daniel Casey and ensemble</i>	Michal Grill, Daniel Caey
Gymnázium Nad Alejí	Prague	The Jabberwocky <i>adapted from the poems of Lewis Carroll</i>	Amery Rock
Gymnázium Kroměříž	Kroměříž	Peter Goes Fishing - <i>devised by ensemble</i>	Keith Painter
ZŠ UNESCO	Uherské Hradiště	Something Like A Midsummer Night's Dream- <i>devised by ensemble</i>	Ann Marie Schultz
Obchodní akademie	Karlovy Vary	Dance with Me - <i>devised by ensemble</i>	Chris Martin
Střední pedagogická škola	Karlovy Vary	Journey Around the World in 15 Minutes - <i>devised by ensemble</i>	Blanka Dryková
Czech Productions			
Soukromá mateřská a základní škola DOMINO	Brno	Pipi dlouhá punčocha - <i>original show by ensemble</i>	Nika Štěpánková
Střední pedagogická škola	Karlovy Vary	Souvislosti - <i>Daniil Ivanovič Charms</i>	Milada Štiková
Gymnázium Cheb	Cheb	Ionesco, pendlovky a plešatá zpěvačka - <i>Eugene Ionesco</i>	Alexej Kokorev
SDS Kšandy	Brno	Křičící žena - <i>Ray Bradbury</i>	Tomáš Doležal

ZUŠ Humpolec	Humpolec	O stařečkovi, který dával rozkvést stromům - <i>Kusajamo Mocco</i>	Jitka Jojtíková
Gymnázium Ohradní	Prague	O Popelce - jinak skončena	Martin Bouček
Rafinofóra	Havířov	Pastička - <i>Markéta Bláhová</i>	Jan Karaffa

Fourth Annual Class Acts Festival, 1998

Mateřská a základní škola DOMINO	Brno	Indian stories- <i>original show by ensemble</i>	Nika Štěpánková, Markéta Brustlová
ZŠ Majakovského	Prostějov	Little Red Hen- <i>Carolyn Graham</i>	Jana Procházková
Gymnázium Františka Křižíka	Plzeň	Jack, Who Almost Got Married - <i>original show by ensemble</i>	Michaela Nováčková
Gymnázium Františka Křižíka	Plzeň	In the Beginning - <i>original show by ensemble</i>	Michaela Nováčková
Gymnázium Františka Křižíka	Plzeň	The Old Friends of Bohnická Street 90210- <i>original show by ensemble</i>	Petra Štěpánková
Dvořákovo Gymnázium	Kralupy nad Vltavou	The Fisherman and his Wife <i>by Carolyn Graham</i>	Katherine Wagner
Gymnázium Aš	Aš	Snapshots - <i>devised by ensemble</i>	Weldon Robinson
Gymnázium Kroměříž	Kroměříž	Gwendolen - <i>devised by ensemble</i>	Keith Painter
SOU Brno	Brno	The Talking Fish - <i>adapted by ensemble</i>	Alice Horalová
Gymnázium Jeronomovo, FX Šaldy	Liberec	The Importance of Being Earnest - <i>adapted by ensemble</i>	Bronislav Havlíček
Vosto5	Prague	Podivíni na jevišti <i>by A.T. Averčenko (inspirational performance that opened the festival)</i>	Ondřej Cihlář

Note: Drama workshops for students during Fourth Class Acts Festivals were led by Joel Sugarman, Peter Meier, Laura Zam, Robert Orr, Kate Spike, David Fisher, Leah Gaffen

Appendix 3 - Participants, ELT Drama Network (1999 - 2001)

Participants		
Ondřej Adámek**	Plzeň	Student, Faculty of Education, West Bohemia University
Dominka Adamová	Prague	ZŠ - state, Bear Educational Theatre
Ludmila Balíková	Olomouc	ZŠ - state
Šarka Bendová (Dohnalová)	Brno	University, JAMU
Markéta Bohmová	Brno	ZŠ - private
Tomáš Dohnal	Jablonec nad Nisou	Gymnázium - private
Silvie Doláková	Fulnek	ZŠ - state
Eva Duspivová*	Vimperk	Gymnázium+Obchodni Akademie - state
Hana Baarova Dušková **	Hradec Králové	- state
Ivana Farkačová**	Jablonec nad Nisou	Gymázium - state
Pavla Fejfarová	Hradec Králové	University, Faculty of Education
Zdeňka Filková**	Valašské Meziříčí	
David Fisher**	Prague	Bear Educational Theatre
Ludmila Havriljuková*	Plzeň	Language school - state
Irena Klečková	Ostrava	Gymnázium - state
Tamara Kopřivová	Plzeň	
Marcela Kovářová	Batelov u Jihlavy	ZŠ - state
Martina Kozáková	Brno	Gymnázium - state
Hana Kuzdasová**	Brno	Language school
Lenka Lánská*	Prague	University, Faculty of Education
Marcela Lukovská	Frýdek-Místek	Pedagogical High School - state
Milena Mrkvánková	Vsetín	Gymázium - State
Anna Palacká	Brno	SOŠ - state

Participants		
Renata Papoušková*	Pardubice	freelance
Máša Pešková**	Hradec Králové	
Lucie Podroužková	Opava	Faculty of Arts, Silesian University
Martina Popadučková	Plzeň	Student, West Bohemia University
Jana Procházková*	Prostějov	ZŠ - state
Galina Šedivá*	Šumperk	
Věra Šprunglová	Příbram	University, Faculty of Education
Renata Štulcová	Litoměřice	ZŠ - state
Hana Modrová Švecová	Olomouc	Gymnázium - state
Elena Verešová		ZŠ - state
Milena Vodičková*	Olomouc	University, Faculty of Education
Nada Vojtková*	Brno	Gymázium - state
Jindra Votrubová*	Sedlčany	
Slovak participants		
Martin Dinga	Bratislava	Student, Comenius University / founder, BELTS
Silvia El Helo	Bratislava	Student, Comenius University / founder, BELTS
Margita Jaurová	Bratislava	ZŠ - private
Barbara Lucká	Bratislava	Student, Comenius University / founder, BELTS
Polish consultant		
Peter Whiley	Czechanów,PL	Head of MAD (Music and Drama), comparable program in Poland
Main Presenters		
Leah Gaffen	Prague	freelance
Eva Kučerová Sikorová	Ostrava	University, Faculty of Education - state

Participants		
Radka Svobodová	Prague	Charles University, Faculty of Education
Mária Vargová	Prešov, SK	University of Prešov, Faculty of Education
Conrad Toft	Nitra, SK	Constantine the Philosopher University, Faculty of Education
Andrea Sabová Billíková	Nitra, SK	Constantine the Philosopher University, Faculty of Education
Geoff Fox	Exeter, UK	Exeter University
Stephen Cockett	Exeter, UK	Exeter University
Main Organizers		
Leah Gaffen		
Malcolm Griffiths		British Council
Staša Závítkovská		British Council
Danuše Zahradníčková		Masaryk University, Center of Distance Education

* Member of the British Council Teacher Training Network

** Joined the project in 2000

Appendix 4 - EDEN Conference Presenters, 2002 + 2003

“Entering the Garden of EDEN,” April, 2002



Dominka Adamová	Prague	Bear Educational Theatre
Šarka Bendová (Dohnalová) + Martina Kozáková	Brno	JAMU / Gymnázium
Karl Eigenbauer	Vienna	Faculty of Education, Vienna
Leah Gaffen	Prague	Freelance
David Fisher	Prague	Bear Educational Theatre
Gabi Friedman	Vienna	High school
Martina Popadučková	Plzeň	Language school, Plzeň
Julie Štastná	Brno	ZŠ
Radka Svobodová	Prague	Charles University, Faculty of Education

“Crossing Borders” - April, 2003

Dominka Adamová	Prague	Bear Educational Theatre
Šárka Bendová (Dohnalová)	Brno	JAMU
Misa Bubleová and Eva Komorousová	Plzeň	University, Faculty of Education
Pavla Fejfarová	Hradec Králové	University, Faculty of Education
David Fisher	Prague	Bear Educational Theatre
Emelie Fitzgibbon	Ireland	Graffiti Theatre Company
Sally Kowanda and Ferdinand Stefan	Salzburg + Klagenfurt, Austria	University, Faculty of Education
Sile Nibhroin	Prague	International School of Prague
Thomas Santos	USA	School of International Training
Radka Svobodová		Charles University, Faculty of



		Education
Conrad Toft	Bratislava	
Milena Vodičková	Olomouc	University, Faculty of Education

Appendix 5 - Programs and Photos, Class Acts Teacher Network National Festivals


 presents
THE FIRST ANNUAL
1995 CLASS ACTS THEATER FESTIVAL
English language theatre productions from throughout the Czech Republic
FEATURING:
 Gymnasium Nad Aleji (Prague)
 Gymnasium Českolipská (Prague)
 Akademické Gymnasium (Brno)
 Gymnasium Sladkovského (Prague)
 Gymnasium Slovanské (Olomouc)
 Produced by LEAH GAFFEN
 Musical Arrangements by JAN KORINEK
 Introduction by SVATOPLUK SKOPAL, *Divadlo na Vinohradech*
 Sunday April 23, 1:30 pm
 Produced in conjunction with:
 The Open Society Fund, Inc.
 The Ministry of Education
 The British Council

DIVADLO KOMEDIE

Second Annual Class Acts
THEATER
 4 May, 1996
 14,00 h.
 Divadlo Komédie
 Jungmannova 1, Prague 1

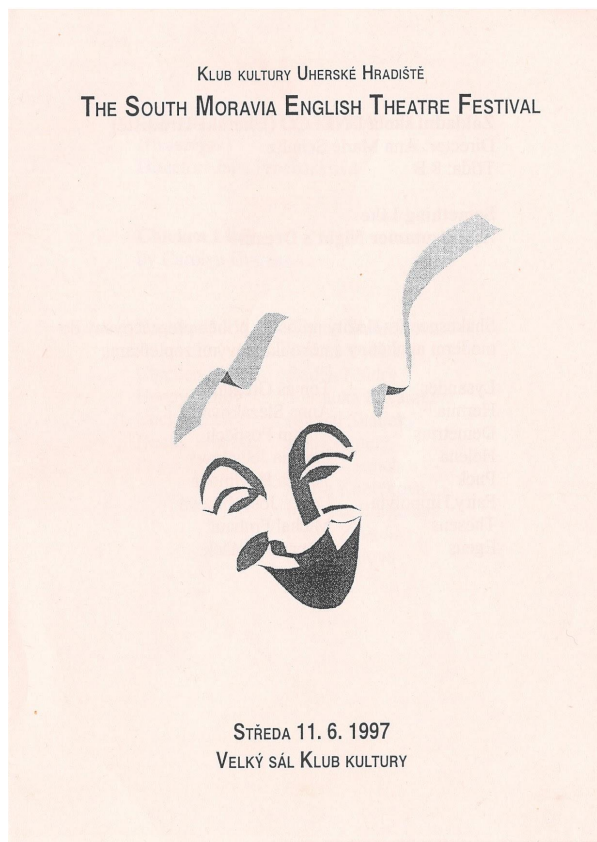

PERFORMANCES BY:
 Gymnázium Nad alejí (Prague)
 Akademické gymnázium (Brno)
 Soukromé jaz. gymn. (H. Kralové)
 Obchodní akademie (K. Vary)
 Gymnázium F. Křížka (Píseň)
 Gymnázium Hejčín (Olomouc)
 Žák. škola UNESCO (U. Hradčité)
FESTIVAL
English language student theater productions from throughout the Czech Republic

3. Ročník Class Acts
THEATER
 10.5. & 11.5. 1997
 13,30 h.
 Divadlo U Hasičů
 Římská 45, Praha 2


10.5.1997: UKÁZKY V ANGLIČTINĚ
 Gymn. Al. (AS), Gymn. Nad alejí (Praha), Soukromé jaz. gymn. (H. Kralové), Obchodní akademie (K. Vary), Gymn. F. Křížka (Píseň), ZŠ UNESCO (U. Hradčité), Gymn. Kroměříž (Kroměříž), Církvev gymn. (Píseň), ZŠ Majakovského (Prostějov), Filozofická f. (Olomouc), FAF (Olomouc)
11.5.1997: UKÁZKY V ČEŠTINĚ
 Gymn. Ohradní (Praha), SFGŠ K. Vary (K. Vary), Gymn. INTEGRRA (Brno), KC. Laňánský (Brno), ZŠ Opatov (Olomouc), Gymn. Chab. (Chab.), Soukromá ZŠ (Brno), Slovanské Gymn. (Olomouc), PdF (Olomouc)
FESTIVAL
Přehlídka studentských představení v češtině a v angličtině z Čech a Moravy

The Fourth Annual Class Acts
THEATER
 5. - 7.6. 1998
 Karlínské Spektrum
 DDM, hl. m.
 Karlínské nám. 7, Praha 8


Friday - 5.6.
 20.00 Podivní na jevišti (Vostof)
Saturday - 6.6.
 14.00 Dvojino - Souk. ZŠ (Brno)
 ZŠ Majakovského (Prostějov)
 15.00 Gym. F. Křížka (Píseň)
 16.00 Gym. Nad alejí (Praha)
 17.00 Gymnázium AS (AS)
 19.00 Gym. F. Křížka (Píseň)
 Dvořáková Gym. (Kralupy n. Vlt.)
 20.00 Gym. Kroměříž (Kroměříž)
Sunday - 7.6.
 9.30 SOU (Brno)
 10.30 Gym. Jeronimova Liberec,
 Gym. FX Saldy (Liberec)
FESTIVAL
Performances in English from schools in the Czech Republic

Regional Festivals



Shows with students

MISERY
J. Lovelace
COMPANY

presents

SOME LIKE IT HOT

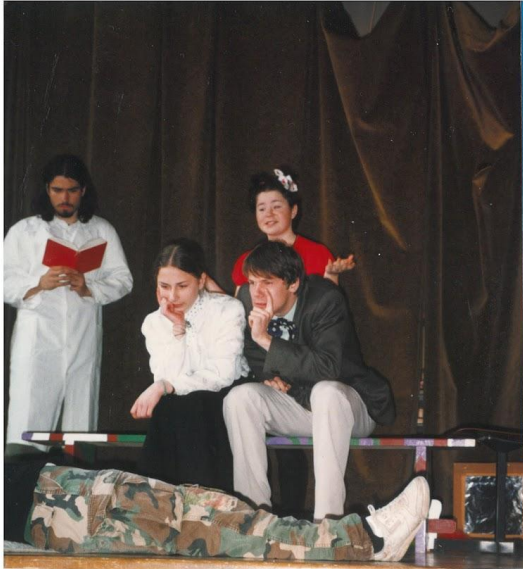
A Class Acts Production

Directed by LEAH GAFFEN and AMERY ROCK
Musical Arrangements/Direction by
JAN KOŘÍNEK and TOMÁŠ ČERVENKA
Choreography by SUSAN TENNER

Sunday, 28 January, 11:00 a.m., 2:00 p.m.
Divadlo v Celetné, Celetná 17, Prague 1

CLASS
ACTS





Sladkovského Gymnázium
presents

ERNESTINE'S AMAZING IMAGINATION

by Alan Ackbourne

Directed by Leah Gaffen

Original Music by Jan Kořínek

Ernestine has an active imagination. The problem is that Ernestine's fantastic daydreams actually start to happen in real life. Unset by the disorder this has brought to her life, Ernestine's father asks her if she can cure her of this strange condition.

*Ernestine má bujnou fantazii.
Tato schopnost jí ztrpčuje život.
Žádostí o pomoc.*

Ernestine
Mum
Dad
Doctor/Soldier/Mysterious
Assistant Librarian
Nurse/Reader in Library
Officer/Auntie May/Attendant
1st Barker
2nd Barker
3rd Barker/Eddie's Trainer
4th Barker/Reader in Library
Referee
Frightened Man
Daughter/Reader in Library
Nosy Reporter
Patient/Soldier/Kid/Tram Driver
Kid's Trainer
Patient/Soldier/Eddie
Patient/Lady in Library





ARSENIC AND OLD LACE
(Jezinky a Bezinky)
by
Joseph Kessering



April 7 at 12:00 and 18:00
ay, April 8 at 11:00
renovated Nad Alejt Studio Theater





Gymnázium Nad Alejí, Prague



Akadémičké Gymázium, Brno

Teacher Workshops, Class Acts Teacher Network



Appendix 6 - Teacher evaluations, Class Acts Teacher Network

QUESTIONNAIRE -- CLASS ACTS 1997 Please send by 5 June.

I. Affect of program on students/teachers:

How did Class Acts affect your students? (answer on a scale of 1-5, 1=greatly, 5 = none)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <u>2</u> Vocabulary in English improved | <u>1</u> Pronunciation/intonation improved |
| <u>3</u> Confidence in spoken English improved | <u>1</u> Increase in general self-confidence |
| <u> </u> New friendships formed among students | <u>4</u> Interest in school increased |
| <u> </u> Other teachers/administrators noticed positive improvements in students | |

What was the reaction of the following people to your participation in the festival?

(please answer on a scale of 1-5, 1=very supportive, 5=entirely disinterested)

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <u>5</u> the director of your school | comments: } without comments |
| <u>5</u> other teachers in the school | comments: |
| <u>1</u> parents | comments: |
| <u>1</u> other students | comments: |

How has your theatre program affected the atmosphere or the structure of the school?

Part II: Training sessions/rehearsals

Was the training session held at a good time of year? NO When is the ideal time of year for sessions? AUTUMN Should there have been more than one? YES

On a scale of 1-5, how useful were the following parts of the training workshop?

- | |
|---|
| <u>1</u> John's improvisation games (Saturday) |
| <u>1</u> Leah and Amery's directing games (Sunday) |
| <u>1</u> Directing session of <i>A Visit to a Small Planet</i> (Sunday) |
| <u>1</u> discussion with other teachers about ideas/problems |
| <u>1</u> informal gatherings at lunch/evening |

Why was the weekend important to you?

I LEARNED SOME NEW WAYS OF WORKING WITH PUPILS AND I MET SOME INTERESTING PEOPLE TOO. THE GREAT ATMOSPHERE OF THE WEEKEND ALLOWED ME TO FORGET ABOUT MANY TROUBLE OF WEEKDAYS FOR SEVERAL HOURS.

What specific ideas or exercises that you learned at the training session did you use with your students? How well did they work?

HANDSHAKING, MIRROR ACTIVITY, VERBAL ORCHESTRA, MAKING EGGS - AT THE BEGINNING OF EVERY REHEARSAL. DIRECTING GAMES - DURING LESSONS. EVERYTHING WORKED WELL.

Part III: Rehearsals

How did you choose your play? If it was original, how did you develop it?

SINCE I'M USED TO DOING C. GRAHAM'S JAZZ CHANTS DURING MY LESSONS I NEARLY IMMEDIATELY DECIDED TO DO HER JAZZ CHANT FAIRY TALE. I CUT DOWN THE TEXT AND LEFT OUT TWO ANOTHER CHARACTERS TO BE ABLE TO DO IT IN 5 MINUTES AND TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR MY PUPILS.

Describe your rehearsal process: how often did you practice? How did you structure your rehearsal

schedule? What did you do in rehearsals? How important were theatre games to your process?

WE HAD ONLY ONE HOUR A WEEK, WE HAD 7 REHEARSALS. WE ALWAYS BEGAN OR FINISHED WITH A GAME. DURING THE FIRST TWO REHEARSALS WE PRACTISED EVERYTHING TOGETHER, THEN THE PUPILS THEMSELVES CHECKED THOSE WHO ACTED THE ROLES THE BEST WAY. I TAPED THE TEXT FOR EACH OF PUPILS AND SO THEY COULD LEARN THE TEXT AT HOME TOO.

What were the greatest frustrations with rehearsals? How did you solve your problems?

WHEN MY HEADMISTRESS AND THREE OTHER TEACHERS OF MY SCHOOL TRIED TO CHANGE MANY THINGS TWO DAYS BEFORE PRAGUE, THEY DID IT WITHOUT TELLING ME ABOUT IT AND THEY COMPLETELY CONFUSED MY PUPILS. SINCE THE CHILDREN LET ME KNOW THEY WEREN'T WILLING TO DO THE THINGS ACCORDING TO THE TEACHERS' INSTRUCTIONS, WE WENT BACK TO OUR ORIGINAL VERSION. I HAD A QUARREL WITH MY HEAD AND SHE DOESN'T SPEAK TO ME WAITING FOR MY APOLOGY.

Part IV-- The Festival

Would you participate in the festival again? YES

What were the most positive aspects of the weekend for your students and for you?
WE ENJOYED OURSELVES DURING THE WEEKEND.

Were there any problems with the organization of the festival?
I DON'T THINK SO.

What did you think about the Saturday night activity in the theatre? Do you have other ideas?
I LOVED IT

Can you think of other activities/programs/etc. that should be part of the festival weekend?

Part IV -- Future

Do you plan to direct a play again with your students? _____ If you are leaving the country, will the theatre program continue at your school? _____
If yes, do you have any ideas for your next show? What would you do differently next time?

Are you interested in joining the Class Acts Association -- a group of teachers who would lead the organization and future planning of Class Acts? I'd like to but I wouldn't be allowed
Do you have any ideas for how you would like Class Acts to grow? No do it since my headmistress wouldn't be willing to release me from school if it was on Friday.

General

Will you be performing your show again? Where? IN UHERSKÉ HRADISTĚ AND MAY IN SOME SCHOOLS OF PROSEKOV REGION
What do you think about the combination of English and Czech theatre performances and teachers?
IT WAS NICE.

What was the affect of Class Acts on your students on an educational and/or a personal level?
THEY FOUND OUT THAT THEIR HARD WORK HAD BEEN APPRECIATED SO THAT THEY ARE ENTHUSIASTIC TO DO SOMETHING LIKE THIS NEXT YEAR TOO. THEY ARE WILLING TO DO IT IN THEIR FREE TIME AND NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF A FESTIVAL

Were there any memorable comments from your students about the festival or the process that you remember? MY PUPILS WERE IMPRESSED BY THE ENGLISH TEACHER'S BEHAVIOUR AND THEIR ATTITUDE TO STUDENTS. THEY LOVED LEAH'S CZECH AND THEY SAID THEY WOULD LIKE HER TO BE A HEAD OF OUR SCHOOL.
(Leah, I'd like you to think about it.)

What was the affect of the program on you on a teaching and/or a personal level?
I FOUND OUT I WAS ABLE TO DO THE THINGS AND I'M MORE CONFIDENT AND SERIOUSLY THINKING ABOUT USING DRAMA IN MY LESSONS. ~~AT THE SAME TIME~~ AND ~~IN MY~~ MY FREE TIME TOO..

Please write a few sentences summing up you and your students experiences.

WE HAVE ONE GREAT EXPERIENCE - UNLIKE MANY STUPID CZECH COMPETITIONS IN WHICH THE WINNER IS GOD AND NOBODY IS INTERESTED IN THE OTHERS' FEELINGS, ALL OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE FESTIVAL WERE WINNERS. MY 12 YEARS OLD PUPILS SAID - IF WE HAD TO GIVE A PRIZE TO SOMEBODY, WE WOULD GIVE IT TO THE SMALL BIRD CHILDREN, MY 51 YEARS OLD HEAD SAID - THE SMALL CHILDREN HAD NEARLY NO TEXT I THEY COULDN'T EXPRESS ANYTHING. (MY HEAD CAN'T SPEAK ENGLISH AT ALL

QUESTIONNAIRE-- CLASS ACTS 1996

Please fill this in and return to me before the end of the school year to katedra produkce, DAMU, Karlova 26, Praha 1 or fax 02/2422 2442. Thanks so much for all of your work this year; it's been a pleasure for me to work with and get to know all of you!

I. Part I -- Affect of program on students/teachers:

How did participating in the program affect your students? please rank on a scale of 1 - 5; 1 = very much, 5 = didn't change at all)

- 1 Vocabulary in English improved
- 2 Pronunciation/intonation improved
- 1 Confidence in English speaking/conversation increased
- 1 New friendships were formed among students
- 2 Increase in general self-confidence
- 5 Interest in other subjects in school increased
- 1 Other Interest in Theatre

What was the most positive aspect of the program for your students?

The teamwork and the new friendships that were formed as a result of working together on the project.

How did participating in the program affect you as a teacher? *It gave me a chance to try out some ideas in a non-formal classroom setting, with students whom I otherwise would not get to teach.*

Did your students perform the play anywhere besides at the festival? Where? *No.*

What was the reaction of the director of your school to your participation in the festival and to your preparation of the play? Of parents? Of other teachers? Of other students? *The directors didn't know anything about it. I was surprised that no parents came to watch, but there were no problems regarding participation of their children. Other teachers & students were amazed that we were able to do this, and I think were very impressed. The caretaker*

Part II- Training sessions/rehearsals

How did the training sessions help you in preparing the play? How could they have helped you more? *was great*
The sessions were very helpful for things such as character development, but we didn't really have enough rehearsal time to put all the things we had learnt into practice.

Should we have met more often? _____ If yes, how many times? *Maybe once more.*

Was there enough time between the first training session and the festival to prepare a play? *Yes.*

How many hours of rehearsal (approximately) did you have? *3 per week* When were they? (after school/weekends/during class) *After school.*

What were your greatest frustrations with rehearsals? How did you solve your problems? *Students not turning up, leaving early. Trying to fit rehearsals around their other commitments. Not learning lines. I'm not sure we solved any of these problems.*

Part III-- Festival

Would your students want to participate in the festival again next year? Some do, some can't.

What were the best aspects of the festival according to your students? According to you?

For the students, the chance to perform in a Theatre in Prague. Only Kather had done any drama at all before this (and that was in Czech). They have now "taught me acting bug," and I feel their lives will never quite be the same again.

For me? Helping to make this happen. And their behavior throughout the weekend was impeccable.

Were you or your students disappointed in anything about the festival? What? Some were a little upset with the technical hitches, but otherwise no.

What would you change about the festival weekend? Nothing.

Part IV -- Future plans

Do you plan to direct a play again next year with your students? No plans as yet.

If yes, do you have any ideas what it will be?

What would you do differently when directing a play next year? Start earlier, make rehearsals less intensive.

What are your goals in theater for the future? Take some time out, maybe go back to acting. No definite goals or plans just at the moment.

Part V-- Comments

What did you learn from participating in this project? Did anything surprise you? I learned that there are other English teachers in this country that share my love for drama. I was impressed by the commitment of my students, and utterly amazed at the quality of their acting on the performance day itself - when it counted. And in another language too! I was very proud of them.

What was the most memorable thing about your experience?

The bus ride coming back from Prague when it was all over. The banter, the jokes, the fun (all in English) was something I shall remember for a very long time.

Any other comments: Tomáš said it was the best weekend in his life. Some of mine have kept in touch with the friends they made in Prague, and visit them from time to time.

I may come to Prague next week. I'll call you, or perhaps we can get together again!

Love, Chris,

Appendix 7 - Call for participants, Class Acts Teacher Network



1995



The Pedagogical Center and CLASS ACTS
invite you to join a series of 7 Workshops, meeting once a month, about

ENGLISH LANGUAGE THEATER IN CZECH SCHOOLS

What is "Class Acts"? Class Acts is a program which introduces English language theater to Czech schools, offering production opportunities for students and training for teachers.

Description: The course will meet once a month and cover various topics, including improvisation techniques, how to choose texts, how to direct a play with students, and how to start an after-school theater program. The course is appropriate for teachers of students at all levels.

Benefits of CLASS ACTS:

- Increases students' fluency in English. Enhances vocabulary, pronunciation, intonation, and students' sense of comfort with English.
- Gives many students their first chance to participate in theater productions. The experience builds leadership abilities, public speaking skills, and self-confidence.
- Introduces teachers to a highly-effective method of teaching English conversation.
- Introduces concept of after-school activities to schools.

When: The course will meet the first Friday of every month, starting November 3rd at 2:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Teacher: Leah Gaffen, American, Program Director, "Class Acts". For the past three years, Leah Gaffen has been developing English language theater programs at gymnáziums in Prague and Brno.

How to apply: Write CLASS ACTS, Katedra Produkce, DAMU, Karlova 26, Praha 1, 116 65 or fax 2422 2442.

PEDAGOGICKÉ CENTRUM
110 00 Praha 1, Na Poříčí 4



Teacher Network: Information

What is the Class Acts Teacher Network?

This is a four-month program for teachers which provides training and financial support so they can produce English language plays with their students. Two (or more) teachers from one school can work together.

Requirements for members of Teacher Network:

- Teacher should participate in training workshop in Prague on Saturday, January 20 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
- Teacher should produce a play in English, ready for performance by the beginning of April.
- If the teacher is NOT Czech, he or she must work in conjunction with one of the Czech teachers at the school (this Czech teacher does not need to attend the training session).
- PREVIOUS THEATER EXPERIENCE IS NOT NECESSARY!!!!

Schedule of events for Teacher Network:

January 20 (Saturday), 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Training Workshop in Prague.

Provides an opportunity for teachers to get to know one another, gives information about how to produce a play.

January-Beginning of April: Production of plays in schools.

Teachers choose text, rehearse productions. Class Acts trainer available to come to schools and help with rehearsals.

Beginning of April: Performances in Schools.

End of April: Class Acts Theater Festival in Prague.

Two day festival at Prague theater which will feature highlights of the performances.

Financial Support:

Teachers in the Network will be provided with:

- Subsidized transportation to Prague for the training session.
- Subsidized accomodation in Prague for teachers who need to come Friday night.
- 1000 Kč per school to cover production costs.

Class Acts CANNOT cover transportation costs for the Class Acts Theater Festival in April, but should be able to arrange accomodations for the students and teachers.

How to Apply:

Enclosed you will find an application for the program. Please send it back to Class Acts before December 4. Class Acts will let you know if you are a part of the Network by December 18. If you have any questions, call Leah Gaffen at the below phone number.

Teacher Network Application

If you have any questions, please contact Leah Gaffen at the below address, fax or telephone.

Part I

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone Number _____

Name of School _____

Address _____

Tel. Number _____ Fax Number _____

Would you be working with another teacher at the school? If yes, please list his or her name:
(teachers who are not Czech must work with a Czech teacher or administrator)
_____ Would this teacher come to the training session? _____

Could you attend a training session on Sat., January 13 from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. in Prague? _____

Would you need accomodation in Prague on Friday, January 12? _____

Part II

On the back of this paper or on a separate sheet, please answer the following questions:

1. Describe the sort of production you want to do with your class. How long do you think it will be? Will it be a class project or an after-school program? How many hours per week do you plan to spend on it? Have you already chosen a play?
2. Describe the students you plan to work with: how old are they? how advanced is their English? how many students (approximately) do you expect to work with?
3. Have there been other theater activities at your school?
4. Do you have any theater experience (none necessary)?
5. Why do you want to be a part of the Class Acts Theater Network?

Appendix 8 - Drama Lesson Template, ELT Drama Network

Daniela Bačová, founder of the Slovak Drama SIG, created this lesson plan template in the summer 1999 to help Slovak teachers create English drama lesson plans. We also encouraged teachers in the ELT Drama Network to follow it when creating lesson plans for the Dramalogue.

DRAMA LESSON PLAN

OBJECTIVES:

LEVEL: Beginner/Elementary/Intermediate, etc.
Young learners/ teenagers/ young adult etc.

TIME: 45/60/90 minutes

MATERIALS:

1. WARM-UP

Possible aims:

- Physical, vocal, linguistic warm-up
- Brainstorming, group-forming, developing contact

Types of activity:

2. PRE-DRAMA

Possible aims:

- Introducing the topic
- Introducing language
- Getting into drama – *tuning in* – developing drama strategies
- Building expectations & commitment

Types of activity:

- Focus on materials – objects, texts, posters, photos
- Storytelling & games
- Drama techniques – mime, still image etc.

3. DRAMA

Aim:

- For students to work extensively developing language and other skills within a dramatic frame, with an appropriate level of risk

Sub-stages:

- a) Establishing a dramatic frame – teacher- & student-in-role – purpose/problem
- b) Extensive work within the frame towards the dramatic purpose
- c) Closing of drama and evaluation

4. CALMING DOWN

Possible aims:

- Closure of the drama
- Reflection
- Lowering energy levels

Types of activity:

- Physical, emotional calming down exercises
- Writing-in-role, journals

Appendix 9 - Drama lesson from Slovakia

Conrad Toft and Andrea Bilikova Sabova taught in the English department of the University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra, Slovakia. They developed a series of lesson plans using drama to teach English grammar. This was published in the *Dedicated Space* journal and presented at our conference.

Lesson Plan: Goldilocks and the Three Bears

Objectives

To present the present perfect tenses to pre-intermediate learners of English in a relaxed atmosphere. The lesson is aimed at 10- 12 years olds, but could be adapted for any age group.

A. Warm-up

Animals in the forest: The students are asked to think of an animal. Then they move around the room greeting each other with their animal noises. (3 mins)

This is a non-verbal activity intended to get the students in the right frame of mind for doing drama and to wake them up and their imaginations. If the children have already learnt the 'English' sounds of animals then they can be encouraged to use these (e.g. 'Woof' for a dog). If you are worried about sound levels in the classroom then you can avoid problems by telling the children that it is night in the wood and they should greet each other quietly to avoid waking the other animals.

Goldilocks' Hair: The students are divided into pairs as follows: The teacher has enough pieces of golden ribbon for half the class. She holds these in her hands so that the students can see the ends but do not know which of the ends are joined together. Each of the students holds one end of a ribbon and the teacher lets go. The students are then attached in pairs (it is much simpler than my explanation!). (2 mins)

This retains the story atmosphere and the ribbons will be used again later to introduce Goldilocks. The activity is great for making pairs, because the teacher is not forcing the students into pairs, it is simply a question of luck. This is based on the 'Strings' pairing activity from Maley & Duff (1982, pp. 79-80).

B. Pre-drama

Drawing breakfast: In their pairs the students are asked to draw an animal and it's breakfast. Tell the students that they only have a short time to do this and help out any pairs who are unable to choose an animal. (3 mins)

A quick, quiet activity which gives the students autonomy. The teacher gives them the opportunity to express themselves – but don't be surprised if you get sharks and people!

Miming breakfast: The pairs are then asked to mime their animals eating breakfast for the other students. The teacher asks the other students what the animals are ('What are they?'). When she has elicited the answer (possibly after giving some help or showing the pictures). She then asks, 'What have they eaten for breakfast?'. As a group the students should respond with 'They have eaten ...'. The students who have performed the mime are then asked 'Cats (or whatever), what have you eaten for breakfast?' The students should respond (with help if necessary): 'We have eaten fish.'. This is repeated for the whole group, stressing the structure by saying this part of the sentence loudly and the rest quietly (with appropriate hand gestures).

This is the first part of the lesson where the students have been required to speak English, and also we have introduced the grammar structure in an appropriate setting. It is important that the teacher stresses the structure without directly telling the students that that is what they are learning.

Creating Goldilocks: Sitting in a circle, the students are shown a picture of a bear (or the teacher can mime this). They are also shown the food the bear eats (honey). They are then shown a picture (or puppet using the golden ribbon from the previous activity). Students pass the Goldilocks in the circle and each student has to say something about her, e.g. 'She has got beautiful hair'. 'She likes eating porridge' (3 mins).

Here the students use their imagination and create the character from the fairy tale. The sentences they make do not have to be necessarily true but they should be grammatically correct. They use any structures and any vocabulary they are already familiar with.

Eliciting the story: The teacher elicits the story of the three bears from the students, starting with the pictures of the bear, the porridge and the girl. The teacher should use the present perfect where appropriate when repeating the students' suggestions'. (3 mins)

If all the students are familiar with the story, the teacher can use the same technique from the previous exercise. Sitting in the circle, the students pass the Goldilocks in the class and build up the story of the Goldilocks and three bears together. Each student says one sentence. The teacher demonstrates by starting the story: Once upon a time, there was... The last student in the circle can finish the story by saying: And they all lived happily ever after.

Jazz Chant: The students will now practise the structure using a jazz chant. Students repeat after the teacher, they stress vocally the new structure. Then the students are divided into groups and each group repeats only one line out of the chant. The teacher conducts them. (3 mins)

Someone's eaten. Someone's eaten. My porridge. My porridge.

Someone's broken. Someone's broken. My chair. My chair.

Someone's slept. Someone's slept. In my bed. In my bed.

Jazz chant gives students good occasion to say the new structures loudly in a crowd, firstly with help, later without help of the teacher. The new structures are vocally emphasised in order to distinguish them from other language used.

Building the house: The bears' house is created in the classroom. This is done in dialog with the students, through moving furniture to form walls etc., using chalk on the floor, or (if there is no space) drawing the house on the board.

Students are made to move and use the space in the classroom. The teacher needs to tell to move in this created space, not to walk through the walls or windows!

C. Drama

Goldilocks' apology: The teacher tells the students that Goldilocks realised what a bad thing she had done when she found out that it was Baby Bear's birthday and that she broke his favourite chair. Each of the students draws a present that Goldilocks could give to the bear to apologise. When all the pictures are ready, each student takes the role of Goldilocks and apologises to Baby Bear in the house, and leaves the present in an appropriate way. The teacher should demonstrate first, ideally using the structure 'I have brought...'. When each student puts their present in the house, the teacher can ask 'What has Goldilocks brought for Baby Bear?'

The learners take the rôles of materials producers in this part. This is the practise stage of the lesson. Stress is put on the correct usage of the structures. At the same time, students apologize to the bear, so another function is being used through this context.

Bad people in the forest: Baby Bear was very happy with the presents, but when the bears went for another walk; they forgot to lock their door... Something happened to all the new presents baby bear had received. After first demonstrating, the teacher asks each of the children to go into the bears house and mime doing something to one of the objects. They take the object out of the house and the teacher elicits what has happened 'What has someone done?' 'Someone has stolen the television?'

This activity practises the usage of have done/ has done and questions.

The bears return home: When the bears return home, they find out what someone has done in their house. In groups of three(ish), the students should first write down and then perform the scene when the bears return home. The students should be encouraged to make a story with a beginning, a middle and an end. The teacher should help the students write the present perfect sentences in the stories.

This is the final verbal production stage where students are free to use any language they want. We expect them to use the new structures as well. This activity requires writing the sketch and performing it.

D. Calming Down

Wanted poster: The bears want to catch whoever has done these terrible things in their house. In the groups (or individually), with students prepare wanted posters. The posters can then be displayed in the classroom.

The self-produced posters can serve as preparation for another lesson where they can play AS IF they were detectives searching for the burglars.

WANTED

XYZ

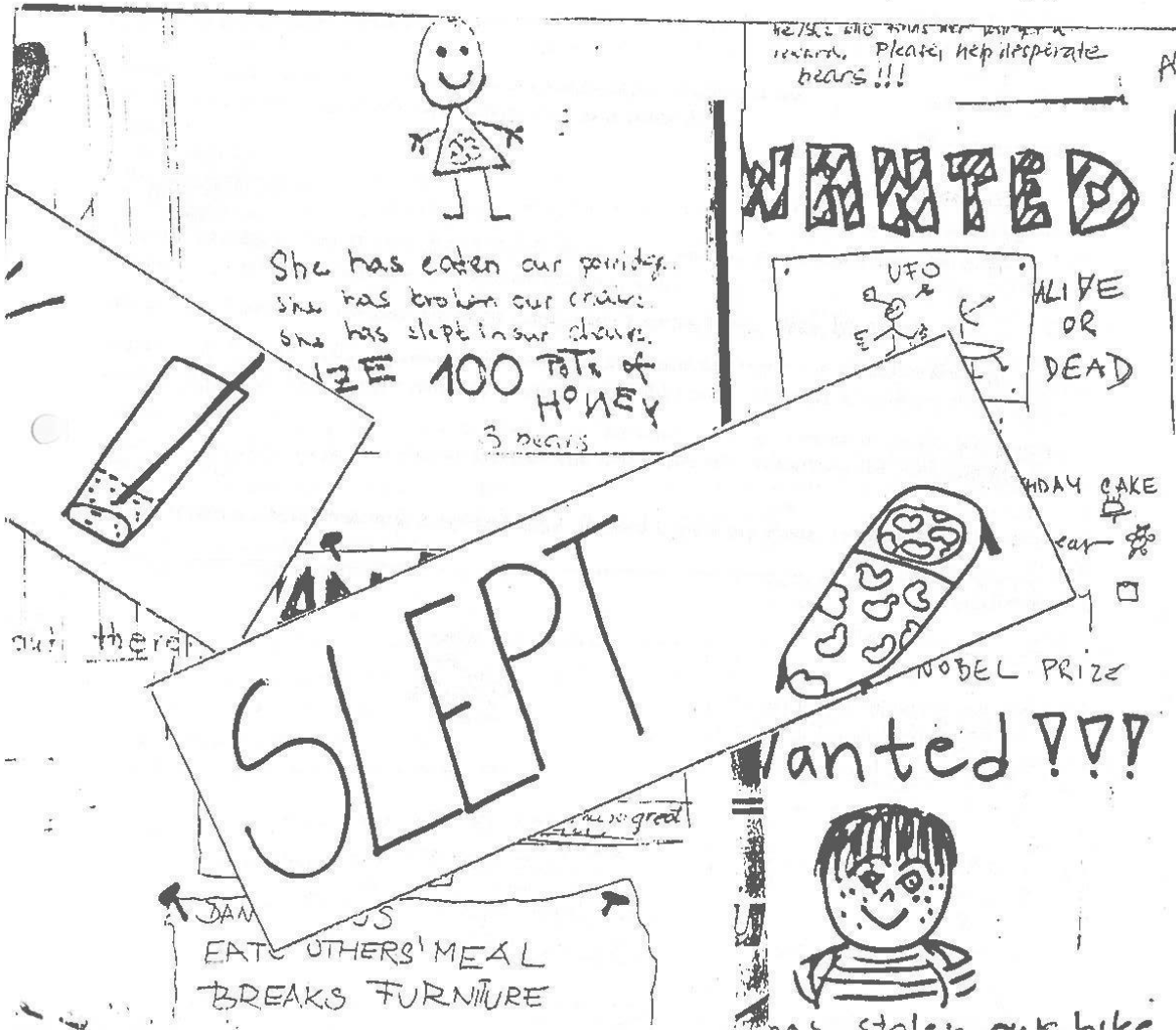
_____ has stolen _____

_____ has _____

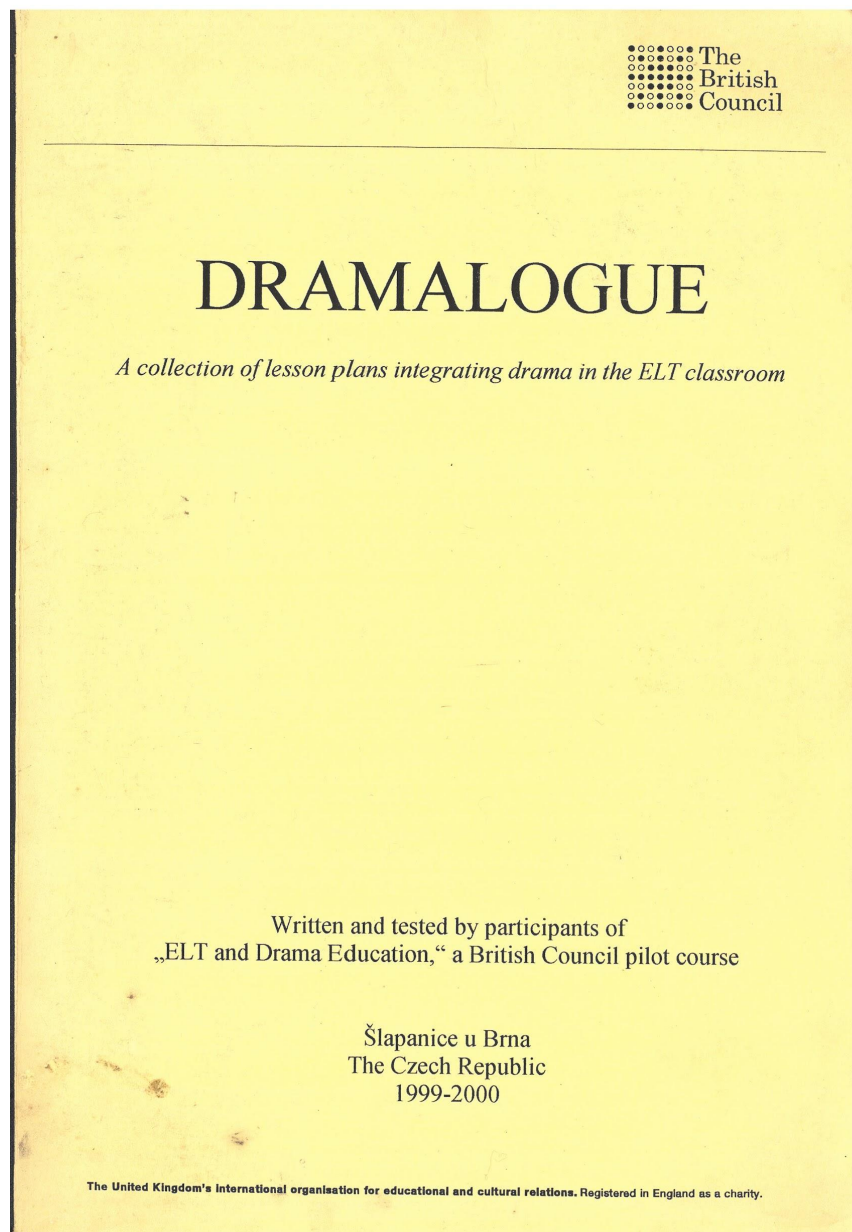
REWARD: _____

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Appendix 10 - Dramalogue, Sample Drama lessons



The British Council
ELT and Drama Education

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Tel., e-mail:	0339-411039, evadu@oag.cz
Privat address:	Mírová 432, 385 01 Vimperk
Tel., e-mail:	0339-415888
Project:	
Name:	Richard Corey – by Edwin Arlington Robinson
Age group:	17 –18
Level of English /Years of English studies:	Intermediate to upper – intermediate
Timing:	45 minutes

Aims and objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to raise students' interest in reading literature / poetry/ in English, • to enable them to experience the whole story through drama , E.I. being a part of it, • to develop their ability to see things from various angles and to empathize, to improve • their social skills / things are not always what they seem to be, a lot may be hidden under surface / <p>to practice and foster their language skills, especially speaking and listening.</p>
Activities:	
Equipment and material:	See lesson plan
Comment:	Linked to teaching literature and values (cultural studies) and developing speaking skills (mainly).

RICHARD CORY

Edwin Arlington Robinson

ELT Drama Lesson Plan

- Written by:** Eva Duspivová
Mírová 432
385 01 Vimperk
phone: 0339 41 1059 / school/, 0339 415 888 / home/
mail: evadu@razdva.cz
- School:** Obchodní akademie a Gymnázium
Pivovarská 69
385 01 Vimperk
- Date:** 11th April 2000
- Classes :** 2.AB , 7.G
- Level of students :** intermediate to upper – intermediate
- Ages:** 17 – 18
- Number of students:** 16 in each group
- Time:** 45 minutes
- Context:** Linked to teaching literature and values (cultural studies) and developing speaking skills (mainly).

Learning objectives:

- to raise students' interest in reading literature / poetry/ in English,
- to enable them to **experience** the whole story through drama , E.I. being a part of it,
- to develop their ability to see things from various angles and to empathize, to improve their social skills / things are not always what they seem to be, a lot may be hidden under surface /
- to practice and foster their language skills, especially speaking and listening.

Assumptions: Students' level of English is good enough to enable them to communicate their feelings, they have already done some rather short activities based on drama techniques, the atmosphere in both classes is good.

Materials: handouts with the poem with the last two lines missing, pictures (a portrait of a handsome man looking successful, an iceberg), a jacket or a hat for R.C., dictionaries, wrapping paper and felt-tip pens, a cassette recorder, suitable music

Sources: The Mentor Book of Major American Poets from Edward Taylor and Walt Whitman to Hart Crane and W.H. Auden, Edited by Oscar Williams and Edwin Honig, Penguin Books USA Inc., Copyright 1962

STAGES

A. Warm up - whole group

1. Teacher (T) shows students (Ss) a picture of an iceberg and asks them to think if it can somehow be applied to our experience with people - that is we do not see enough.
2. T reads the poem Richard Cory without the last two lines. After a moment Ss are given the handouts with the poem and dictionaries. In-groups of four they clarify what is necessary. T walks around helping if needed.
3. T puts the "portrait of R.C." on the board and Ss come and write what they think his image in the town was, what feelings and attitudes to him people probably had. Everybody can read it then. (If time allows, Ss can discuss in their groups at first and then go to the board.)

B. Pre-drama

1. All the students are asked to mingle slowly, imagining who they are, e.g. a person from R.C.'s town, what this person's feelings towards R.C. are (e.g. a poor widow whom he helped, a neighbor...). Whenever they get to someone else, they should say only one or two sentences that would express their attitude to him (e.g. " I will always be grateful to him?")
2. After a short moment T stops them („FREEZE") and reads them the last four verses with emphasis on the last two.

C. Drama

1. Ss are asked to choose one of five groups: members of his club, his servants, neighbors, his colleagues from university studies and his childhood friends. They make a still picture of those people in a situation just after they learned about R.C.'s death. Ss are asked to decide WHO they are (each of them) and WHAT each person's relationship to R.C. was, WHERE they are, WHAT TIME of the day it is, WHAT they are doing and to make a still picture of the situation. Each group member should think of a sentence he or she would say to express their person's emotions – VOICES IN THE HEAD.
2. An exhibition: Ss present their tableaux one group after another and when T touches them, they voice their character's thoughts. Because of time, only some tableaux (chosen by Ss) are enlivened.
3. Ss working in pairs. One of them is R.C., the other his friend. R.C. tells his friend why he doesn't feel good, why he is unhappy. The pairs / or some of them / then report to the class.
4. T in role: T wearing a hat / a jacket / sits in the middle of the room. Ss standing all around are again the people from town they were in the very beginning (B.1.) and they tell R. C. one sentence each – their good-byes.

D. Calming down

1. Students work individually. In the role of R.C.'s friend after having talked with R.C. they write a short letter to R.C. (that is before he shot himself). They exchange it with a partner.
2. Another option: Ss in pairs write an epitaph for R.C. The pairs then get together forming two groups and sharing what they've written.

Evaluations /Feedback

The plan is rather demanding, it worked well with the more advanced class and even with them I had to give up the T in role part and assign the activities in part D as homework. The students were active and interested, but some of them (the "rational types") needed more time to start up. This can probably be changed if I include more drama in my classes.

Follow up/ possible HW, continuations in next lessons

Homework

Students can write a story inspired by the lesson – What do we see and what is hidden?

Continuation.

In the next lesson after a short warm up students get in the original groups (servants e.t.c.). T describes the situation: police in the town are investigating the case, because it seems R. C. had no reason to commit a suicide. In their groups, Ss decide what each of them will say to the police inspector when he comes. When they are ready, one group is investigated after another while the rest of the class is in the role of the inspector. A circle of the other Ss, who may ask two to three questions each, surrounds the questioned group. All the groups are investigated.

Finally Ss in groups of three write a police report, a newspaper article, a TV documentary screenplay about the case of R.C. Their works can be displayed as posters or, if time allows, presented by representatives of the groups

RICHARD CORY

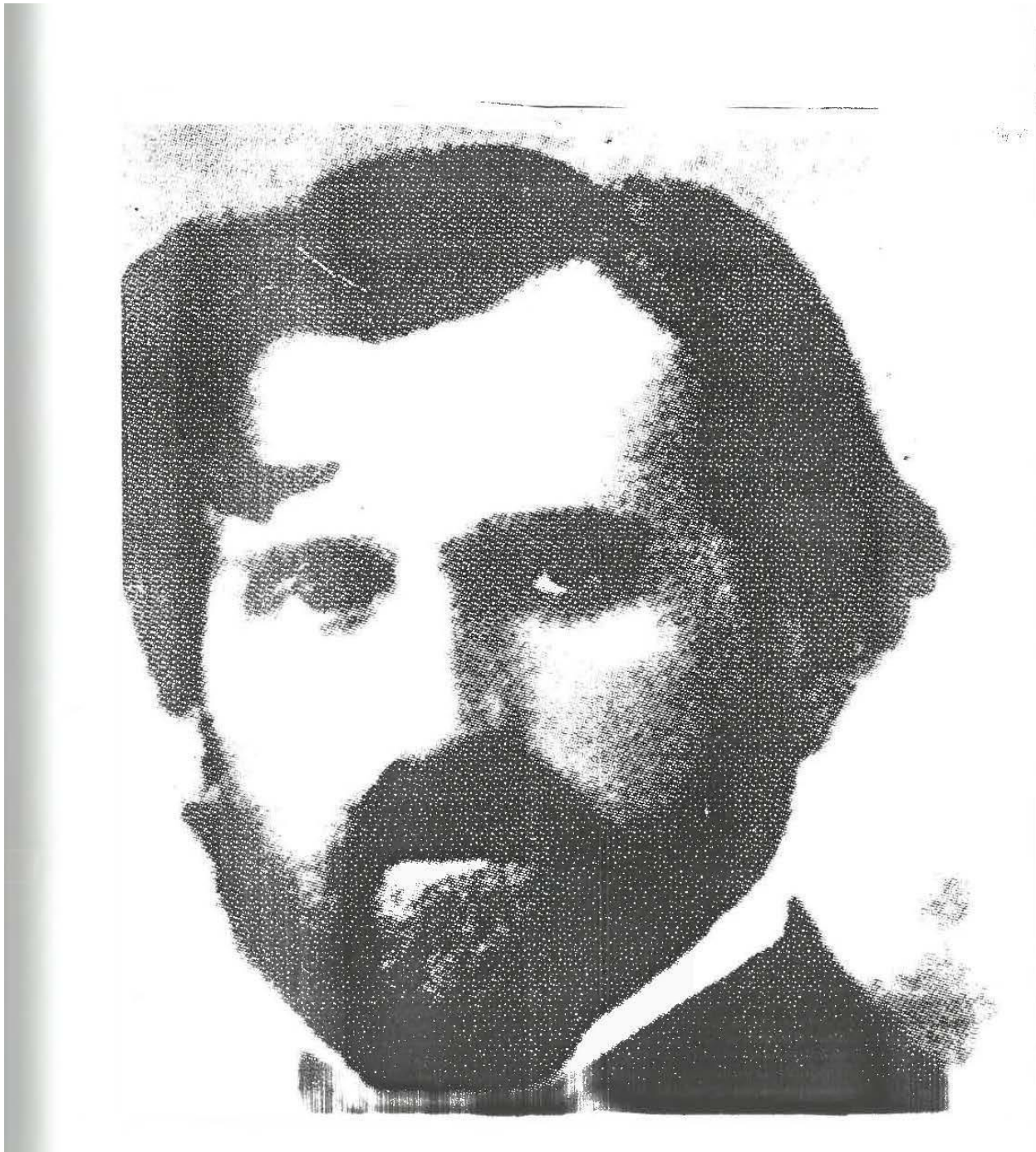
Whenever Richard Cory went downtown,
We people on the pavement looked at him:
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean favored, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed,
And he was always human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
"Good morning," and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich—yes, richer than a king,
And admirably schooled in every grace:
In fine, we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;

Edwin Arlington Robinson (1869 - 1935)



**The British Council
ELT and Drama Education**

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Tel., e-mail:	019 / 74 20 097	066-7314280
Project:		
Name:	SNOWBOY	
Age group:	10-12 year old children	
Level of English /Years of English studies:	Beginners / elementary (1 year)	
Timing:	3 lessons per 45 min	
Aims and objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to round up 4 lessons of new textbook - to learn how prehistoric people lived - pupils should be able to express their feelings w/o words "read from face" 	
Activities:	Frozen pictures (still images), story machines, hot-seating, Teacher in role, voices in head, writing, drawing	
Equipment and material:	Prehistoric objects, large sheets of paper, markers, glue tack bell, Magic stone, flashcards, string, cassette player, tape	
Comment:	Can be easily adapted to lower or higher level pupils	

SNOWBOY

Authors: Lída Havriljuková, SJS Plzeň, Marcela Kovářová, ZŠ Jihlava

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School: ZŠ Otokara Březiny, Demlova 34, Jihlava 586 01
- basic school with extended language teaching

Date: February 9, March 29, April 4, 2000

Level of students: beginners, elementary

Class: 4 A, 4 C, group of unqualified teachers of English

Age: 10 – 12

Number of students: 4 A – 12 pupils
4 C – 20 pupils
teachers – 9

Time: proposed time is *three lessons per 45 min + time for homework*
Actual time used when practising the lesson plan: A/ 90 min
B/ 135 min
C/ 90 min

Context: Pupils revise and practise most of the new language structures they were supposed to learn in the first four units of the textbook. They are encouraged to use the new language in “similar-to-real-life” situation without concentration on grammar and rules.

In these lessons there is included a need of at least having the idea or having knowledge of history of human beings – their style of life, ways of behaviour, attitudes, values...

Learning objectives: vocabulary – jobs, weather, classroom objects, numbers, rooms and places, family

Grammar – subject pronouns, *to be* singular + plural, *to be* questions, possessive pronouns

Phonology – short forms (I’m, you’re,...), linking

Skills – pupils should get able to express their feelings and attitudes towards someone (something) through face expressions and body language (incl. Gestures). They should get able to identify and manage their feelings. Miming (expressing something without words) should become a part of life.

Cross-curricular goals – get familiar with our (human beings’ history and traditions)

Social skills – pupils should learn how to react on differences among people – different colour, different background, traditions, attitudes,

Assumptions: The things that pupils must know (in English) were taught in 4 lessons that precede the story in a textbook.

Materials: textbook GO, S. Elsworth & J. Rose, 1996, Longman Limited

Special equipment: prepare few things that look like *prehistoric objects* – or the real prehistoric objects (e.g. animal fur, stones, piece/s of wood, sea shells, wooden necklaces, earthenware, stoneware...), *blank sheets of paper, magic markers, glue tack, bell, MAGIC STONE* (a stone with some drawing on it), *prop* for Snowboy (to single out a child that is performing this character from others), *flashcards* with weather pictures (optional), copies of the *blank speech bubbles story version, tape GO, cassette player, string*

- Enclosures:**
1. Textbook, p. 18 – rap song, vocabulary game
 2. Blank speech bubbles story version
 3. Textbook, p. 17 – SNOWBOY comics
 4. Letter for Mr. Henderson – fill-in variation
 5. Textbook, p.17 – SNOWBOY comics with sample division into 3 parts

LESSON 1

A. WARM UP

- ❖ **Weather** - The aim of this activity is to revise weather expressions/ phrases pupils have already get familiar with (*It's sunny/hot, It's raining, It's windy...*) and to agree on how to express the “announced” weather by body language and gestures/miming. It's also aimed to prepare them for the “big” drama later. Pupils are asked to reach their objects chosen within the classroom, according to the weather teacher announced. They should manage the storm, the wind and so on. Then the pupils are asked to choose any object in the opposite half of the classroom and reach it, again, through the announced weather conditions.

Estimated time: 5 min

Grouping: whole class working at the same time

Space organisation: desks should be moved and put close to walls to create an open space for lot of movement inside

Instructions: explain the rules in Czech and then call out the phrases and use bell to give signal about new instructions coming

- ❖ **Prehistoric objects** – The aim is to introduce the MAGIC STONE together with the prehistoric objects and get familiar with their English names. At the beginning look at the objects together with pupils and maybe talk about them for a second in their native language (e.g. their names, usage, and reasons for being made). Then you should introduce the English equivalents for the Czech names pupils offered. If you think children do not need any further repetition of the new words, use the MAGIC STONE to make 3 – 4 pupils the objects. Divide the class into 3 – 4 groups, ask them to sit down in a circle, but no one is allowed to sit next to the member of his or her group. Now play the very-well-known and popular SALAD (All pupils named “necklace” must change place because the person inside the circle hasn't got a chair and shouted this word. The person left inside without a chair shouts another word and proper children change places – no one is allowed to stay on his/her chair. On SALAD everyone has to change his or her places.)

Estimated time: 10 min

Grouping: whole class working at the same time

Space organisation: chairs should be in the middle of the room and should make a circle

Instructions: talk about the objects and their “history” in Czech and rules for SALAD, if not familiar to the children, should also be explained in Czech not to waste the precious time. If the game is known use simple English instructions, e.g. Make a circle! Take your chairs! Sit down!

B. PRE – DRAMA

- ❖ **Prehistoric village** – During this activity pupils “are forced” to think how people used to live (where, how, what things they used when e.g. cooking, drawing). Explain to pupils that they are going to create a photo – frozen picture – of a prehistoric village and give strict rules – nobody is allowed to move, nobody is allowed to speak or laugh. Each group is given a sheet of paper, a piece of glue tack and a magic marker to draw – very simple drawing – the background for their scene/photo (e.g. cave, mammoth, plants, fire). Decide or let the pupils decide who is to be enlivened by the touch of the MAGIC STONE and thus can say a sentence (very simple sentence

is enough and works, e.g. I have a necklace, This is my stone, This is my mother, I like this fur). a word or just make a sound or gesture, as he/she wishes. Pupils can (but do not have to) use any object they want. Use the bell to get pupils' attention to watch each others' performances/photos (one group shows their photo while the others are watching them quietly). Teacher uses the MAGIC

STONE to make the photos alive. At the end use the MAGIC STONE to bring pupils back to the present time and to look at the objects and the village as archaeologists

Estimated time: 10 – 15 min

Grouping: pupils work in groups of 4 (max 5) to form their prehistoric families. They can also make names for their family – e.g. Flinstones, Yellowstones, and Pinkstones

Space organisation: each group finds their corner, or they can stick the sheets on the desks or on the wall or maybe they want to sit on the floor (like around fire)

Instructions: as the instructions are very complicated and difficult here, they should be given in Czech. The rules, on the other hand, could be given in English and pupils should understand – Don't speak! Don't laugh! – if the teacher helps with gestures. This depends on how much the children are used to commands in English.

Possible problems: pupils might laugh at the performers in order to disturb their concentration and damage their work – you should be strict here about being fair!!

C. CALMING DOWN

- ❖ Singing and writing time – Now it's time for doing the extra exercises in textbooks – the rap song, the vocabulary game *firstly, they are asked to circle all the words that belong to family, then jobs. ...Secondly, they are given few seconds to write down as many words as they can remember from the family group, jobs group* = AN OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

Estimated time: 5 min

Grouping: the game can be played in pairs or in groups of 3 that would compete with each other

Space organisation: pupils sit somewhere close to their partner

Instructions: for the song instructions can be given through simplified English and for the game it's easier to explain all the rules in Czech and then use English to start, to finish and to state which words should be found (*textbook, p.18 see enclosure, No.1*)

- ❖ Blank speech bubbles – pupils are given copies of the story of SNOWBOY but all the speech bubbles are empty. Their task is to fill the bubbles with whatever they feel is appropriate and sounds good and of course with what they are able to say in English. Now they are creating a new story because they have not seen the original story yet. When they are finished they read their story in roles. (*see enclosure, No. 2*)
- ❖ Snowboy story - this activity is, for pupils, the most relaxed. Pupils listen to the story and at the same time they look in their books at the pictures and read (*see enclosure, No.3*). Afterwards you can talk about the story, if you have enough time and if you feel the pupils want to talk about what they have just heard. Ask them who were the main characters. What are their names? How old are the kids? How old is SNOWBOY? Encourage pupils to plan their summer holiday. Offer them to spend this year with Mr. Henderson – the archaeologist - and become his assistant. They should write a letter to him and say as many information as they are able to in order to get the job in prehistoric village – either you can read an example or if you think the pupils can manage let it up to them. The other way is to give them a kind of form to fill in – for the weaker children (*see enclosure, No.4*). This can be done as homework for the next lesson.

Estimated time: 10 –15 min

Grouping: first part – blank speech bubbles fill-in – should be done in pairs, maximum in groups of three as there are only three characters speaking in the story and the second part – the listening can be done individually.

Instructions: for the first part it would certainly be worth the time to instruct pupils in Czech while the listening part could be described through both languages – Czech and English (e.g. Listen, Read, Ready?, Stop talking start)

LESSON 2

DO NOT FORGET TO BRING YOUR MAGIC STONE AND HAVE IT IN YOUR HAND OR AS A NECKLACE!!!

A. WARM-UP

- ❖ I found it – This activity aims to revise the few words pupils learned the previous lesson (necklace, stone, wood). Before the lesson starts, hide the “prehistoric” objects, used last time, somewhere in the classroom. When the pupils come, ask them to help you find the lost prehistoric objects – it can also be introduced as exam/a training for becoming an assistant of Mr. Henderson. If they are successful in their search they should call out “I found it! Nice/lovely necklace! EXTRA IDEA = Start with calling out colours. e.g. red and whoever finds it calls out “I found it!” or “I found red!”

NEED OF SPECIAL BEFOREHEAD PREPARATION!

Estimated time: 5 – 7 min

Grouping: whole class is working at the same time but half of the children has a territory e.g. from the window to the blackboard and the other half is working in the other part of the classroom

Space organisation: before the lesson starts, move the desks from the centre to the sides so that there was enough space in the middle for the chairs standing in a circle

Instructions: use Czech to be fast and brief

- ❖ Competition for summer job - Pupils were asked to write a letter/an application form to get a summer job as an assistant of Mr. Henderson, the archaeologist. Now one group of children is in roles of Mr. Henderson and chooses the best from the applicants. The applicants at the same time count (whispering) to 20, let's say 3 times. Then the roles are switched and again the best applicant is chosen. Then it's up to the teacher to decide who is to get the job. Announce and mark the winner – with a sticker, for example.

Variation: both groups work at the same time - not so time consuming

Estimated time: 5 – 7 min

Grouping: pupils should be divided into two equal groups

Space organisation: one possibility is to make a semi-circle from the chairs – for the committee while the other children – the applicants - sit on the floor or both groups work at the same time sitting on the floor

Instructions: use Czech for instructions

B. PRE – DRAMA

- ❖ Robots – Ask pupils to choose one English word – any word they want. Through the power of the MAGIC STONE children are changed into robots which know only one word. Teacher counts to 20 and pupils are allowed to make one robot-like movement for one number and the teacher can count slowly, quickly, very slowly, etc. and pupils must adjust the speed of their movements to the speed of teacher's counting. Teacher can walk among the robots and she touches someone by the MAGIC STONE the robot must say his/her word.

Estimated time: 5 min

Grouping: all pupils are working individually at the same time

Space organisation: chairs moved aside to have enough space in the middle of the room

Instructions: the rules are given in Czech then when all pupils understand and are decided about their words use English

C. DRAMA

- ❖ Story machines – Listen to the story again once more before you start working with it. Then agree on dividing the story into three parts and after that for each part choose one “characteristic” or “typical” sentence for each character (*sample division of the story and roles, see enclosure, No5*). There are three characters who speak in the story – Pat, Nickie and Mr. Henderson. This means that from this time 3 pupils must work together. Encourage pupils to decide who is to play Pat, Nickie and Mr. Henderson – GOOD IDEA – if possible make groups of two girls and one boy. Agree on who is to perform the first, the second and the third part. Explain the principles of story machines. Complements of the machine can not move or speak/say their sentence until they are touched by the MAGIC STONE or hear a sound that “wakes them up” (snapping fingers). The three stand in a circle and when everyone is ready the characters take their position/standing and get quiet. The MAGIC STONE touches the first three where only one is allowed to speak/say his/her sentence/make a gesture at a time. The first complement (three children) is followed by the second, the third, and again another group that performs the first part etc. Each group of three is to go round twice before the second part is performed.

Estimated time: 20 – 25 min

Grouping: the ideal would be if there is such number of pupils that can be divided by 3, if there is not (which is more probable) choose the weaker pupils to work and speak at the same time as the stronger ones

Space organisation: use the chairs to make the biggest possible semi-circle so that the children could sit down when listening and preparing

Instructions: as this activity is quite complicated use Czech to make everything as much clear and understandable as possible

D. CALMING DOWN

- ❖ Explosion – something went wrong in the machine and it is going to explode now. Tell your pupils that when they hear the word “explosion” they are allowed to explode in whatever way they want – jump, fall down, dance - but no shouting!!
- ❖ Homework – draw a next picture to the comics story from which it will be clear what happens with SNOWBOY. Agree only on one fact – he is alive when taken from the ice.
- ❖

LESSON 3

A. WARM – UP

- ❖ Homework – talk a while about what happens to SNOWBOY in the modern world according to pupils and their pictures. Maybe you could choose one or two to tell his/her story to the rest.

B. PRE - DRAMA

- ❖ Voice in the head – give pupils the task to think of three places where SNOWBOY could go with his new friends – Pat and Nickie. Lead them to these three places: a) kitchen in Pat’s house, b) street in a town, c) school – school corridor or classroom. Divide pupils into three equal groups and give each group string to make borders for the kitchen, street and school. Then talk with your pupils about how SNOWBOY would feel in the modern world – frightened, shocked, surprised, etc. – and how others would react to a boy who is “different”. Then choose/better is to ask for a volunteer to play the SNOWBOY in the modern kitchen. Other members of his/her team become after being touched by the MAGIC STONE the kitchen facilities through their body position. The SNOWBOY is walking in the kitchen (do not forget the prop – e.g. an old scarf, animal fur on his shoulders) expressing his feelings and thoughts by facial mimics and body language. Others, now the kitchen facilities, can speak or make sounds (wow, agh, etc) according to SNOWBOY’s behaviour. Only one is allowed to speak at a time. (not necessary to use English here – if pupils

Feedback – although I felt doubtful before trying my lesson plan with my 10-year-old pupils, looking back now I should admit we all had wonderful time when doing this little drama. What is even more important for me, is the fact that we used a lot of English in very peaceful and relaxed setting, seems to me, almost unconsciously. I was surprised when the girls and the boys co-operated with each other quite naturally – no quarrelling or refusing working with “other gender”. My pupils were enthusiastic to go on with all the activities we prepared for them and were willing to come next afternoon to finish what we began.

The other group of pupils is, essential to add, lower level. This fact forced me to use much more Czech but still the children got in it with such eagerness that we decided to perform a little scene at the end of summer term for their parents based on the story of the SNOWBOY. I also consider fair to admit that I added little improvisations in cases like – who is to perform the scene as number one – using the Magic Stone’s power to choose the right one.

After seeing and realising children’s reactions on dramatising the English lessons I am certainly motivated to prepare more and more drama, or little drama, lessons. For making them love the language and showing them that learning something new does not necessarily have to mean being quiet, write down huge amount of information and being bored I would do anything from that time.

From “drama point of view” I think we realised and learned that face and hands can sometimes say more then hundred words flowing from our mouth. We all become conscious of the power of our feelings expressed through mimics of our face and gestures of our hands. Children took in the fact that having different coloured skin does not mean someone is bad. To my big surprise most of these children do not judge people of their colour but of their behaviour. The bad attitudes towards certain people are brought to their minds by the “silly” opinions of the adults around them (just my opinion!).

If all or most of the people behave as the children did when playing the little drama, everyone would be happy living on this planet.

ENCLOSURE, No. 4.

VERSION A

Dear Mr. Henderson,

I read about the prehistoric village. I want to work there.

My name is _____, _____ surname is _____, I am
 _____ years _____, I _____ from _____, _____ address _____
 _____, My mother is _____ is
 _____ father _____ a _____, He’s _____ years
 _____.

_____ am a student _____ school. I like _____,
 _____ and _____, I dislike _____,
 and _____, I have one / none / two/ three / _____ pet/s. My pet is a
 _____.

Best wishes

VERSION B

Dear Mr. Henderson,

I read about the prehistoric village. I want to work there.

My name is _____. My surname is _____. I am _____ years old. I am from the _____. My address is _____, My mother is _____. She is a / an _____. My father is a / an _____. He's _____ years old.

I _____ a student at _____ school. I like _____, _____ and _____. I dislike _____, _____ and _____. I have one / none / two / three / _____ pet / s. My pet is a _____.

Best wishes

Enclosure No. 2.

1 Read the story and answer true or false.
 1 Nickie is on holiday. True
 2 Professor Henderson is her father.
 3 He is a dentist.

2 Talk about the people in the story.
 Who's this?
 What's his/her name?

Enclosure No. 3.

1 Read the story and answer true or false.
 1 Nickie is on holiday. True
 2 Professor Henderson is her father.
 3 He is a dentist.

2 Talk about the people in the story.
 Who's this?
 What's his/her name?

Appendix 11 - Letter, Minister of Education



*Ministr školství,
mládeže a tělovýchovy České republiky
Minister of Education,
Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic*

Ing. Ivan Pilip

Prague, 13 February 1996
Č.j.: KM 5046/96 - 21

Dear Ms. Gaffen,

Thank you for your kind invitation to attend the performance of the stage version of the film *Some Like It Hot*, which was performed in English by Prague gymnázium students on Sunday, January 28 1996.

Unfortunately I was too occupied to take part at the event which, I am certain, was the event of all English speaking people in Prague.

I appreciate your activity in the field of introducing theatre education /productions to Czech schools very much. The purpose to help students gain fluency in English language, give them their maybe first chance to participate in theatre performances, build leadership and public speaking skills and at the same time to introduce Czech educators to an alternative method of teaching English conversation is rather important for the Czech education at this stage of new developments.

I have been informed about your 1995 Class Acts Theater Festival, which was a great success. Certainly your programme of implementing English language theatre productions and creation of a network of teachers interested in introducing theatre programmes to their schools is of a great value and I am glad to express my thanks to you for everything you have done for education in the Czech Republic.

Yours sincerely,

Vážená paní
Leah N. Gaffen
katedra produkce
DAMU
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116 65 Praha 1

Appendix 12 - Photos, ELT Drama Network



