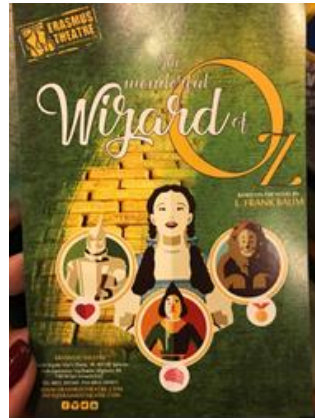


Chapter 1

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“THE WONDERFUL WIZARD OF OZ”



Summary

Theatre activity is one of the best ways to stimulate creativity and introduce a second language as an essential and authentic method of communication. That's why our students have been encouraged to go to the theatre to see an interactive performance in English language, performed by professional actors.

The story was THE WONDERFUL WIZARD OF OZ, a beautiful children's novel, born from the pen of the American writer Frank L. Baum.

Introduction

Many language theorists and philosophers have emphasised the importance of context on communication and the structured nature of language. The social nature of drama is an art form, which impacts positively on language learning.

Actors of the show we saw , who were all from the UK, played the roles using their mother tongue. Obviously, given the young age of the audience (mostly students from lower secondary schools), the staging has been modified according to an understandable level of English.

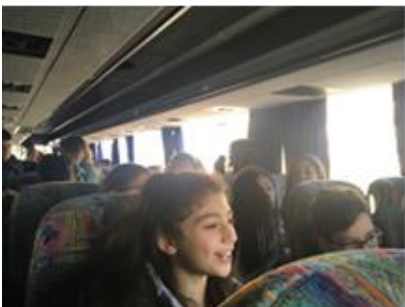


Learning objectives:

- ✓ To encourage creativity and confidence with English language through a live performance.
- ✓ To develop general theatre knowledge in particular a fantastic story for teen agers.
- ✓ To develop students' social skills.
- ✓ To introduce and provide practice with key vocabulary, to develop language skills and range of expression.
- ✓ To encourage collaboration and cooperation among students.
- ✓ To motivate students to learn a foreign language.
- ✓ To encourage learner autonomy and responsibility.
- ✓ To encourage students to take an interest in theatre and watch a performance.

Resources

- ICT LAB
- LANGUAGE LAB
- Computers and I PAD
- Private bus from school to the theatre and back.



Activity

I step:

The first part takes place in class. The students are sat in a circle with the teacher who tells them the story. In this first step the task of the teacher is introducing the plot and the different names of characters, trying to get all the students to understand the story. Some questions are written on the board and students try to answer them individually.

II step

The second step takes place in the ICT lab. The students are asked to create a story telling by using computers. They can create a cartoon strip retelling the main events of the novel with their favourite scenes, after that they have to scan and upload them into the software to create storytelling: "STORYJUMPER".

Some of students added speech bubbles to make it more interesting, others added their voice (in English language)

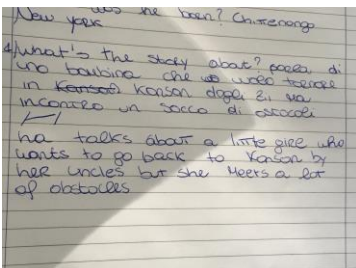


III step:

In the third step, students do a research on the American writer Baum. This research has been carried out in class with the aid of students' tablets and in the language lab. Students, through cooperative learning, familiarize with the author, they find out who wrote the story and who was he.

Some of them managed to present their findings to the classmates who were the audience. At the end all the students, including students with special needs, were able to answer the most important questions:

- What's the title of the story?
- What's the story about?
- What time is it set?
- Who are the characters?
- Who is the author?



IV step:

The fourth part is mainly spent to learn great part of vocabulary for the show, to help students to understand words and the most difficult expressions that actors will be using in the play. In this step learning happens by playing, with different types of games:

- *A maze:* Students should be able to colour the right yellow brick road to carry Dorothy and her friends to the Emerald City.
- *English scrambled words:* the students must be able to compose the right word by using the help of the Italian meaning
- *Crossword:* Following the indication of the clues, students guess and write the words across and down.
- *Read their minds:* students are asked to guess what the four comrades are thinking about on their path to the Emerald City. What will they ask the Wizard?



V step:

The final step is the show at the theatre.

Students see a live theatre and become more knowledgeable of the plot and vocabulary of the play.

At the end of the show "The Wizard of OZ" the actors interacted with our students and they were really excited about this that they asked a lot of questions without shame and using English language. They asked about the plot, about the emotion for the actors onstage, about their life and what should have to do to set a show and act like them.



Comments from the learners' surveys

Students had a great experience! They learnt a story, they studied a writer and they acquired new vocabulary and new language skills.

They found this experience very interesting, amusing, above all because it was carried out outside the walls of the school.

It was a school trip too, in fact the theatre wasn't near the school and it was a chance to be all together with teachers and students from other classes.

Most of our teenagers had never been inside a theatre before, for many of them this was their first sight of a live play.

They increased their curiosity towards theatre and some of them confessed to want to learn acting and choreography.

Final remarks

Results of this outdoor experience made it clear that one of the most important aims to help young learners to study a foreign language is encouraging students to learn differently, having fun, away from the traditional school methods.

Students need motivation and external stimulation to keep up their interest.

Theatre could be an interesting method, whether students will act or they just watch a play. It allows to acquire life skills, knowledge of theatre performances and language competences in a natural way.

While some families take going to the theatre for granted, there are many of young teenagers who never go, and probably don't even know that a theatre production exists.

I absolutely believe that performance for school, especially in a foreign language, should be done every year.

Supplementary material

[Links to blog, videos, etc.](#)