Do you remember the last time you addressed a gathering? What was the occasion and how did you perform? Whatever the situation, chances are that you were slightly nervous about the presentation. You must have rehearsed the same a few times. Some of you would have practised standing before the mirror in order to give a perfect show. This is where role playing can be useful. In this lesson we will look at what role play is and we’ll see how you and your team can use this technique to prepare for a variety of challenging and difficult situations.

Incorporating role play into the classroom adds variety, a change of pace of opportunities for a lot of language production and a lot of fun.

What is role play?

Role play is any speaking activity when you imagine and act as somebody or put yourself in an imaginary position/situation. The joy of role play is you students can become anyone you aspire to be – The President, The Prime Minister, Queen, King, millionaire, pop star, great musician – the choice is endless. Imaginary situations – Functional language for a multitude of scenarios can be activated and practised in role play. ‘At the restaurant’, ‘At the hospital’, ‘In a shop’, ‘In a classroom’, ‘In a railway carriage’ – are all possible role plays.

Why use role play?

It is widely agreed that learning takes place when activities are engaging and memorable. It is fun and motivating.

Quiet students get a chance to express themselves. The world of the classroom is broadened to include the outside world. Real situations can be created and students can benefit from the practice.

Role playing takes place between two or more people, who act out roles to explore a particular scenario. It is most useful for preparing for unfamiliar situations. By acting scenarios, you can explore how other people respond to different approaches; and you can get a feel for what the likely approach is workable and those that might be counter-productive. You can also get a sense of what other people are likely to be thinking and feeling in the situation.

By preparing for a situation using role play, you build up experience and self-confidence, with handling it in real life; and you develop quick and instinctively correct
reactions to situations. This means that you will react effectively as situations evolve rather than making mistakes or becoming overwhelmed by events.

You can also use role playing sessions to improve communication between team members and to see problems or situations from different perspectives.

**How to use role playing?**

Follow the steps given below:

1) **Identify the situation:**
   To start the process, gather people together, introduce the problem and encourage an open discussion to uncover all of the relevant issues.

2) **Add details:**
   Make sure that everyone is clear about the problem that you are working on.

3) **Assign roles to yourselves:**
   Identify the various characters you are going to play and prepare to fulfil the character’s perspective goals, motivation and feelings.

4) **Act out the scenario:**
   Test and practise different approaches for handling situations.

5) **Discuss what you have learnt:**
   Share your experiences after the role play and welcome suggestions to improve further.

Some people feel nervous when asked to play a role as they may not be confident. To such students, two of you may write the dialogue, enact or demonstrate and ask them to follow. Give them the role they want to play. Help them to fight out their inhibitions.

Role playing exercises teach skills that are often assumed to be learnt outside the classroom. The students are required to use their imagination, background knowledge appropriate to the character being role played and communication skills.

**Ground rules for interactive exercises:**

- Argue your character’s viewpoint as best as you can
- Be courteous and open minded. Let the argument not be heated.
- Develop listening skills – be patient
- Avoid rhetorical tricks like interrupting speaking for longer than you need in order to keep your opponents and critics silent.
- Logical well-thought-out arguments are more likely to convince others
- While debating stay on the topic and seek a solution even if you have to compromise
Role play example:

**At a doctor’s clinic:**

Patient: Good evening doctor

Doctor: Hello Mrs. Ratnam, How are you?

Patient: Not at all well doctor! I’m feeling giddy, my stomach is troubling me. I have an acute pain and….

Doctor: Come on Mrs. Ratnam, Sit down and relax. Let me see what’s troubling you what did you eat this morning?

Patient: I had 6 puris and three cups of channa masala for breakfast. I also had an omelette. I finished my breakfast with a glass of lassi.

Doctor: Oh! For lunch?

Patient: Nothing much doctor! I had two chappathis, fried rice, sambar rice, vegetable curry, chicken 65, curd rice and one glass of mango milk shake.

Doctor: Oh My God! Did you have some tea in the evening?

Patient: Of course doctor. I had two samosas and two masala dosas.

Doctor: Mrs Ratnam, for the next two days take some salads and lemon juice.

Patient: After meals or before meals doctor?

Doctor: ???
Roleplay - conversational Techniques discussions – Oral Reporting.

Roleplay being a speaking activity, you have to put yourself into someone else’s shoes and become that person for which you should have good conversational skills. Unless you learn to talk and express your opinions in public, it is very difficult to climb the ladder and reach the top in your field.

Conversational Techniques play a very important role in developing one’s speaking skills; converse action is a mental occupation and it is merely speaking whatever comes to your mind. A good conversationalist should first be a good listener. All of us talk but there is a difference between simple talking and trained conversation. A good conversationalist is neither one who dominates the show nor is a silent spectator.

Mastering the art of conversation would make us better engineers, better managers, better readers and people would like us there are types of conversation.

Chat: The least formal of all conversations
Tete - & - Tete- (French) Confidential conversation
Dialogue - two way conversation
Communion - takes place at a higher level where words are not necessary –

Communion with Nature – God etc.

Good conversation should involve people concerned, sustain interest, listen intently, give way for new ideas and use suitable language according to situation, occasion and people.

While speaking body language is very important – non verbal cues.

Conversational Techniques include tips like – make your audience feel important, making others feel appreciated, reflecting the underlying feelings & implications express opinions and preferences in an objective manner, disagree in a polite and convincing manner, give reasons and offer explanations.

Once you learn Conversational Techniques one should take part in discussion of various subjects.

Three friends meet at the college after writing their exams.

Vinod: Hello everybody
Ashok: Hi, Vinod, How did the exam go?
Vinod: I think I have done well
Ashok: What about you David?
David: I have done all my exams well except maths
Ashok: I think I am going to fail in basic mechanics

Vinod: Let’s forget exams for a while

David: I wish we had a better maths teacher

Vinod: Why? I think he was okay only problem was he gave too many sums to work out

David: yes, because you have done well you’ll ask such questions

Ashok: Will both of you stop now let’s go out and enjoy. We shall go for a movie and then to our famous food joint.

**Dev and Sohan discuss coeducation**

Dev: Thank God I studied in a coeducation school. CBSE schools are great. We have lots of talented girls and boys and lovely cultural shows.

Sohan: Of course we do have lots of fun at the same time we have a healthy competition between boys and girls.

Dev: Non coeducation schools believe in segregation of boys and girls. It is very sad for those boys and girls who do not have the opportunity to mingle with the opposite sex.

Sohan: They are so old fashioned. It is high time they change with the times

Dev: Yes I hope so. They must understand that when boys and girls do not study together, their exposure is very limited and they find it very difficult when they have to work together. Atleast initially they find it a great problem.

Sohan: Co-education removes misunderstanding, mistrust and false fears prevailing among boys and girls. It brings the best out of them.
Assignment

Write a conversation among friends discussing examinations

Answer:

Govind: Hi Ramesh, Had a nice week-end?

Ramesh: Yes, I watched three movies.

Radha: Three movies?

Ramesh: Yes, What’s wrong? After all I saw them at home. Govind, How was your week-end?

Govind: Boring. I tried studying but ...........

Radha: I am thoroughly prepared for the first 4 exams. I am only worried about basic electronics and physics.

Ramesh: Don’t tell me you are preparing for the exams during the weekend.

Radha: Of course. Our exams start in three days.

Ramesh: Ha! Ha! Three days to go. I shall study tomorrow.

Govind: Be serious Ramesh. I think we should start studying right now. We cannot afford to have arrears or else our placement would be affected.

Ramesh: I think you are right. Let us follow Radha and start studying in honest.