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transforming lives through the arts

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Say it with dance

Using movement for
language development



EYFS & KS1

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The priority in one of my schools is to aid language development of Reception EAL learners. Here I share some activities and explain how they can help language development. 'The blue balloon' by Mick Inkpen is a great story for initiating ideas.

Use simple words combined with actions/movement to teach language. Find a balloon in your pocket, play with actions and words like "Stretch", "Squeeze", "Float" and "Bounce". Keep repeating the actions and the words to aid understanding via making all words physical. This allows the learners to explore the meaning of the words kinaesthetically, thereby aiding language development and recall.

Learners can then experiment with language and action by finding their own inventive ways to pop the balloon.

Combine actions and language to teach pulse and rhythmic awareness by creating simple chants/ rhymes.

Words can be structured into chants and combined with movement patterns so developing rhythmical understanding/pulse internalisation of both the action and the sentence structure. For example: "Pop, pop, balloons go pop." Clap to the chants to help develop rhythm.

Use rhymes and chants to develop movement quality. Play around with the movement dynamic and use of voice to help pronunciation and movement awareness.

For example when pretending to stretch the balloon say "streeeeeeeeetch" thus emphasising the ee sound. While using the voice, resist against yourself making the balloon really hard to stretch and so giving more quality to the movement.



Play with sounds

Balloons are great for incorporating sound. For example, try "whizzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz" and then add movement to enact the sound.

Sounds eliminate stress for EAL learners and this will encourage use of voice.

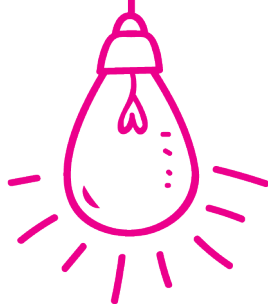
Take them on an adventure

to make the words and actions coherent.

'The blue balloon' is a great story for developing adventures. You can use the balloon to fly to magical worlds...



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