

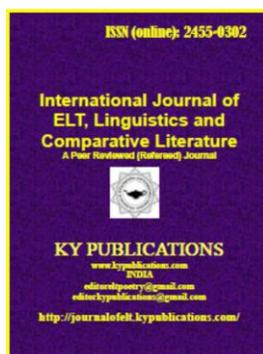


## KINAESTHETIC METHOD: LEARNING THROUGH ACTING

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### ABSTRACT

Applied dramatic techniques can be used as an effective alternative learning technique in teaching English to Second language learners. If the students are actively involved in learning activities, they will be more motivated to participate and look forward to learning. The aim of the paper is to devise the different practical dramatic methods that can be used effectively in ESL (English as a Second Language) classroom. The paper will also calculate the benefits, scope and the modality of implementing such methods in ESL classroom.

Games lubricate the body and the mind.....*Benjamin Franklin*

Key Words: Learning styles, auditory, visual, kinaesthetic, drama, effective teaching.

Tell me and I forget,  
Teach me and I may remember,  
Involve me and I learn

--*Benjamin Franklin*

### INTRODUCTION

You might have noticed that several people can interpret the same event in different ways and can take different actions as an aftermath. This shows that people can respond differently to the same stimuli, which proves that people have different learning styles. The three main learning styles are visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. Visual learners learn best by means of visual images like charts, graphs, pictures and even through non-verbal clues of the teacher. Auditory learners learn through listening to lectures and reading. Kinaesthetic learners learn by doing. They prefer hands-on approach to things and learn through trial and error. Out of these three styles of learning, kinaesthetic learning has not received much attention in language classrooms in the recent past. At the college level, lecture based classrooms mostly favours visual and verbal learners. No fruitful attention has been given to the learners who learn by doing. No attempts have been made to count the beneficial relations between language teaching and dramatic techniques. So, the aim of this paper is to count the benefits of using dramatic techniques, based on the theories of kinaesthetic learning, as a teaching strategy in ESL classroom. The paper will then offer some kinaesthetic learning activities and will give some pedagogical suggestion for the designing and implementation of such activities.

**Defining Kinaesthetic Learning:** Kinaesthetic learning can be defined as learning by doing. It may be called as a type of "active learning", which involves hands and body movements to stimulate learning. Kinaesthetic learners prefer hand-on-approach so they believe in a type of learning which involves physical actions. They understand information best while moving and doing involving themselves in project work, role-play and real-life activities. Thus, we can say that kinaesthetic learning is a learning through moving, touching and doing.



According to Feldman and Mc Phee "Kinaesthetic learners are most successful when totally engaged with a learning activity. They acquire information fastest when participating in a science lab, drama presentation, skit, field trip, dance or other active activity. Because of the high numbers of kinaesthetic learners, education is shifting towards a more hands-on approach; manipulative and other 'props' are incorporated into almost every school subject, from physical education to language arts. Hands-on teaching techniques are gaining recognition because they address the challenging needs of kinaesthetic learners, as well as the diverse needs of auditory and visual learners"(2007). Kinaesthetic learners learn best through a hands-on-approach and actively exploring the physical world around them. They feel restless if sitting longer, so they may need to take frequent breaks while sitting. They enjoy doing project work, craft work, experimenting, constructing, surveying and performing tasks. They also have a tendency to handle something or fidget with something. According to Susan Griss (2013) kinaesthetic learning brings physical movements into the classroom and let the students experience the curriculum through their bodies. This helps them to make deeper emotional, interpersonal and kinaesthetic connections to academic subjects and make learning more meaningful. Begel, Garcia & Wolfman (2004) believes that kinaesthetic learning activity is" .....any activity which physically engages students in the learning process". According to the researcher like Howard Gardner (2011), kinaesthetic abilities should be developed in children in young ages through suitable classroom activities, as this will develop their kinaesthetic intelligence and will help them in future in becoming kinaesthetic performer in higher education. This will also help them in developing a kind of ability through which they can express their ideas, views, emotions, knowledge, experience, assumption etc. through movement and dance. This proves that kinaesthetic learning develops tactile abilities and abilities of expression as well.

**Benefits of using Kinaesthetic Learning Activities:** The pedagogy of using drama techniques or kinaesthetic learning in English language classroom is very beneficial at all levels. Language teachers should implement kinaesthetic activities as a part of teaching-learning process. Such activities allow students to indulge themselves physically with the material and with peer(s). This makes the classroom atmosphere active and energetic and saves the classroom from the boredom of lecture-based traditional classroom. The lecture-based classrooms are typically a type of one-way classroom, where knowledge flows from one end (teachers' end) to the other end (students' end). This means students do not have any participation in classroom lectures which often results in "no gain" to the mediocre and weak students. In such classrooms only the most basic levels of intellectual behaviour can be reached. Kinaesthetic learning, on the other hand, is student-centred and provides all types of students with the time and space to reach more sophisticated levels of abstraction.

Moreover, this methodology of "act to learn" in language teaching develops physical and cognitive skills. It allows students to directly observe and understand what is happening by releasing them from the passive learning posture and engaging them physically and creatively in what they are learning. They can now able to make connections between content and context and can better understand the course topics. This is one of the major reasons of incorporating hands-on-approach in education and a reason to why in contemporary scenario vocational courses are getting much attention than ever before.

Furthermore, using acting pedagogy in language classroom unconsciously develops some of the personality traits and soft skills of the students like creativity, imagination, affective cognition, self-discovery, self-expression, team-work, interactivity, taking risk, individual responsibility, overcoming inhibition, concentration etc. According to Blame (2008:27-28) ".....acting pedagogy can also be found in non-professional contexts, especially in the area of applied theatre, where the aim is less to achieve professional-level virtuosity than to foster integrative and consciousness-widening skills. In this context acting can be seen



as an empowering and participatory activity, which emphasizes interpersonal interaction. Acting's combination of physicality and cognitive abilities, especially role-playing, make it a crucial element of many kinds of group-building activities".

Kinaesthetic approach observes formative assessment rather than summative assessment. Here, teacher can improve student's incorrect move immediately and do not have to wait for any unit, weekly or monthly test. This also helps the teacher to assess the level of students' understanding and any misconception can be dealt with immediately. If such activities are conducted at regular basis then it can even help in creating a rapport between the teacher and the students. Kinaesthetic learning activities can be applied to all curricular subjects like maths, science, literature, language etc. which makes it an interdisciplinary method.

**Kinaesthetic Learning Activities:** Teacher can improvise some of the interesting kinaesthetic activities in the English language class to make the class more effective and interactive. Below are some example activities.

**1. Role Play:** This activity can be performed in single or in group. Teacher can assign role to the students according to the script. Now the students are required to read out the dialogues according to their assigned roles. In the first attempt they can read the dialogues from the given script. But then in the second or third attempt they have to communicate the dialogues without any assistance. They are supposed to wear face expression according to their respective roles where they can show anger, surprise, thinking, happiness, sadness, wonder etc. They can use different gestures and can move around in the class as they think the characters in the role might be doing. The role of the teacher is that of an observer of the activity. The teacher can ask for the retake if he/she finds the first take imperfect. This activity will develop the communicative skill of the students. It will also help them in shedding off their inhibitions and gaining confidence, hence in becoming active member of the class. Learning by acting and communicating out the dialogues will help them to remember the dialogues for the longer term.

**2. Touching and Describing:** The art of description can be taught very easily with this activity. Here teacher can ask the students to pick any of the object from the box, and can ask them to describe the shape, size, colour, texture of the object on the basis of what they touched, saw and experienced. Role of the teacher is that of the facilitator of the vocabulary if the students are not getting the exact describing words. During the activity the teacher is supposed to write the describing words on the board as soon as uttered by the students. This activity will help them in learning, memorizing and remembering adjectives (describing words) easily, playfully and for longer term. The activity is also helpful for visual and auditory learners. "Touching and describing" helps the learners to memorize the connections easily.

**3. Collage:** This kinaesthetic activity will develop the students' skill of team-work, being creative, problem solving and decision making. In this activity the students are required to give and devise their views on the given issue or concept in a visual, creative and engaging way. Here, teacher can divide the class into groups of two or four students. Now teacher is required to give a particular idea, word, issue or concept to each group one by one silently. Likewise each group will be having a different or identical idea, word, issue or concept. Now each group is required to represent that assigned topic with the help of a range of material provided to them e.g. colour papers, pens, marker, magazines, newspapers, scissor, glue, shapes etc. After completing their collage, they are required to leave their collage on their desk and are required to move around the classroom to view the collage of the other groups. Now, they are required to write comments on each collage and should also guess what issue, word, concept or idea each collage is trying to represent.



**4. Making Brochure:** This activity will build up students' confidence in communication skill as they are engage in short discussion with other groups and will also improve their academic writing skill of writing a paragraph. For this activity large space is needed for ease of movements and interaction. Students are first of all divided into group of four and are asked to research on the topic like "Great Indian Cities". Now after selecting any one city, they are required to move around in the class, interacting with each group and collecting information regarding their topic and completing their brochure. They can collect information regarding historical importance, landmarks, climatic conditions, food, cultural importance, trade etc. of the place. Now after completing the brochure, each group can be indulge in writing a small paragraph seeking information from their brochure. Teacher may wish to set a time limit to add an element of competition.

**Pedagogical Implications:** For an appropriate designing and successful implementation of kinaesthetic activities, the following factors should be consider.

- There should be some specific aim and objective of the activity and that aim and objective should be very clear to the teacher as well as to the students.
- Activity should be designed according to the age, level and background of the students.
- Activity should give enough opportunities to the students to facilitate it themselves.
- Every student should get equal opportunity to participate in the activity.
- Rules, instructions and parameters for the activity should be laid down beforehand.
- Any need/circumstances of individual student should be taken into consideration.
- Profile of the class should also be taken into consideration e.g. Size, heterogeneity, gender etc.
- Any need of the supplementary material should be dealt with beforehand for the smooth functioning of the activity.
- Some practical factors like allocated time, classroom space, surrounding etc. should also be taken into consideration.

### Conclusion

Applied dramatic techniques are unanimously considered as an effective, beneficial, influential and valuable teaching strategy. It provides active and constructive learning. It has a unique ability to engage all learning styles, thus it can be used very effectively in ESL classroom to especially motivate kinaesthetic learners. For the intended results, they are needed to be designed and implemented carefully because poor designing and implementation will left the classroom in nothing more than a fish market. Researchers and teachers can continue to search some more kinaesthetic learning activities or can also adapt those available.

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