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6

## Teacher-in-role and talk moves in the subject English

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Three first-year PSTs have rehearsed a teacher-in-role activity at university college together with English and drama campus teachers. The rehearsals are part of the ReTPro rehearsing cycle. The preparation has been thorough, with the PSTs first observing their campus teachers model teacher-in-role. Good modelling consists of showing good examples. This provides visual support for theory, inspiration, and a safe environment. Teachers utilise drama as a powerful educational tool. In this context, dramatisation involves the teacher getting into a role and performing scenes or situations as a way of teaching. The audience can shift between being passive observers and active participants in the event.

After that, the PSTs have planned and rehearsed their teacher-in-role activities together with their classmates.

They are now entering their first practicum with third graders and will perform an excerpt inspired by the book *Matilda* by Roald Dahl. The objective of the lesson is to improve the students' English vocabulary. The plan is to employ the teaching methods *teacher-in-role* and *classroom dialogue*. Meeting the new group of students, the drama activities, and going into roles in teaching make the PSTs tense and nervous. However, the effective modelling, preparation, and rehearsals have provided them with a sense of security and self-confidence.

As the learning session is about to start, there is complete silence in the classroom. The students sit expectantly at their desks, ready to learn. Simple but effective props are used to represent roles and settings.

After a brief introduction in both English and Norwegian, the students become immersed in the story and the conflict between the kind teacher and the cruel headmaster. They actively participate in the roleplay, engaging through dialogue. They provide input when prompted with questions, or when they wish to contribute. The student group is easy to guide, empathy flourishes, and, obviously, they collectively unite against the antagonist in the story.

The PSTs must deal with numerous and conflicting emotions. The PSTs' sensitivity and identification with their role boost the students' confidence. The students are encouraged to speak in English. The teaching situation fosters a dynamic process that encourages students to think in new ways. There is a high level of engagement, and the learning dialogue in the classroom alternates between Norwegian and English. Those students who are confident in English respond impressively with well-formed phrases. Anxious students are

encouraged to reply with single English words, or in Norwegian, so that they can participate. Everything is allowed, and everything feels safe.

Through the drama session, the students gradually grow in confidence. An engaged and enthusiastic group fosters the courage and motivation to express themselves. When they allow themselves to relax, they become spontaneous, and everything is spiced up with improvisation, vitality, and creativity. Teaching becomes playful and informal. The connections formed during interactions between the students and the PSTs help to establish positive and secure relationships.

After the session, everyone agrees: English is enjoyable. Using drama and stepping into roles are an excellent way to learn.

The PSTs are at the very beginning of their training to become teachers, and many have had limited experience in a classroom setting prior to this. The use of drama in teaching so early in their studies requires a degree of gentle courage and practice. The preparation for the session provided the PSTs with the required security and confidence. In the ReTPro rehearsals on campus, they modelled, planned, discussed content and implementation, and also made preliminary adjustments. Additionally, they conducted several rehearsals of their teaching activity. This thorough groundwork offered inspiration, and was crucial for them to successfully execute the teaching activity in the classroom together with the students.

Throughout class, the PSTs showed courage; they embraced the entire space, and excelled.

During the lesson, I observed that they had a well-rehearsed script as a foundation for their teaching, while also incorporating elements of improvisation. The PSTs engaged in spontaneous dialogue with the class, responding in the best way they could, either in Norwegian or English. They utilised vocal variety in speech delivery, body language, and props throughout the narrative, seamlessly incorporating these elements while improvising.

Since they were unfamiliar with the students, and unsure how they would respond to this teaching method, being prepared for the unexpected became an invaluable experience.

The second activity uses conversation pictures and talk moves to improve the students' vocabulary. Through rehearsing in phases 1 and 2 of the ReTPro rehearsing cycle at the university, the first-year PST has prepared a teaching activity for the English subject. She will utilise the theory of talk moves as the foundation for a learning conversation in the classroom. In this context, the

conversation involves the teacher communicating with the students through talking, listening, and reflecting. The teacher may ask questions, with the aim of challenging the students to think and reflect more deeply on a topic. Students will practise vocabulary acquisition and discuss everyday situations in English.

The PST has engaged in thorough preparation under the subject teacher's guidance and has practised and reflected with fellow PSTs. Furthermore, reflections on the enactment in the classroom are part and parcel of the PST's term paper.

The PST is seated in the classroom with 20 fourth-grade students who have gathered in a semicircle in front of her. On the back screen, there is a large, colourful conversation picture featuring many small and surprising details. The picture shows a farm with some illogical and peculiar elements that might intrigue the students, inviting them to think creatively. The subject matter is light-hearted until they notice a sheep with pink stripes, a blue sun, purple pigs, and a television perched on the roof of a barn.

The PST's objective is to inspire the students to use their imagination to discuss what they see, think, and believe about the image in English.

The student poses the question to the class: What can you see in the picture? This is a committed and enthusiastic group; all the students raise their hands and eagerly rattle off words in English and Norwegian: 'I can see a cow, a dog, a chicken... I can see a bull; I can see a farm.' The students receive praise and encouragement for their contributions. Instead of correcting mistakes, the PST repeats the word in English with the correct grammar and always clarifies when the word refers to both Norwegian and English. Here, she employs the talk move 'revoicing'. In this way, she ensures that all students are engaged and can learn at their level through the principle of effective inclusion in teaching.

Some students are confident enough to use the language more extensively, speaking English in whole sentences, and introducing new, somewhat unexpected vocabulary:

*Student: I can see a cow tanning.*

*PST: Yes, very good! What does tanning mean?*

*Student: It sort of means you're going brown.*

*PST: Yes, that means sunbathing. Tanning. Very good!*

The PST remains calm. At the beginning, she asks questions based on a rehearsed format. This creates a safe environment and allows for a controlled learning conversation in collaboration with the students. Her vocal pitch varies, and she occasionally adopts a low, whispering tone to ensure the students are completely quiet and focused to comprehend what she is saying. There is a pleasant and close rapport between the PST and the students.

Several talk moves are then used in the learning conversation, such as agreeing/disagreeing, adding on, and revoicing. The PST actively engages in choral reading throughout the session. The students pronounce the word in unison: *Toothpaste!* The PST gestures to them and asks them to repeat in chorus: *Toothpaste!* Her self-awareness increases throughout the learning conversation, and after a while, she dares to expand the content of the discussion. Relational dynamics are fostered through conversation, centring on the students' interests in the English subject. The questions become increasingly more open-ended, with all students invited to confidently put forward their answers.

*PST: What is wrong in this picture?*

*Student: I can see a blue sun.*

*PST: Yes, very good. Why do you think it's blue?*

*Student: Because it's a glass wall (read: the picture is taken through a glass wall). Those stripes look like glass shine. Yes, I think it's blue glass.*

The PST concludes with a summary, encouraging all students to utter an English word they have learned. Even after she has taken away the busy and teeming picture from the screen, many students respond with lengthy sentences in English. The atmosphere in class is safe, positive, and inclusive.

The PST's aim for the session was to utilise *talk moves* to foster a productive classroom discussion in English. She had been well prepared for the session thanks to the ReTPro rehearsing cycle through modelling, rehearsals, try-outs, and pre-guidance.

The combination of her strong performance, a positive student group, thoughtful questions, and reflections related to the busy and teeming picture

facilitated an effective learning session. Some of the talk moves were used more than others. Although the PST was well prepared, many of the responses were unexpected because she did not know the students well enough. A learning conversation is always partly planned and partly improvised.

For example, the PST had not anticipated that one of the students would explain the blue sun by suggesting it had a blue glass wall in front of it. Here, she dealt nicely with this unexpected input event by challenging another student, asking if she agreed. Additionally, she enquired in English what colour the sun should be, as this was a natural progression in the conversation. Another student contributed to the discussion, stating, 'because they are trying to trick us'. This demonstrates that the PST has triggered and facilitated the students' thinking.

Techniques like choral reading and agreeing, disagreeing were used systematically, while questions requiring longer explanations from the students were used less. The PST guided the class throughout the session in a supportive and constructive manner.