

Steps to the stage – making ESP theatre projects work

- 1) The course: BET (Business English Theatre) – ESP with theatre
- 2) The students: What can the course achieve?
- 3) The teacher: A “How to” for ESP theatre projects?

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BET – facts & figures

started: 2009 at Reutlingen Univ. of Applied Sciences

credits: 2 ECTS (+ written work: 3), **extracurricular**

schedule: 3 hrs per week, 10 weeks, + 1 afternoon, + 1 tech rehearsal > 1 or 2 shows

advertised learning goals:

fluency, vocabulary, self-confidence

+ “fun”, “new people”, “different way to learn (business)

English”

BET – course outline

product: play(s) with business topic or setting

introduction to acting through improv activities →
getting comfortable using body and voice
week 1-3

getting to know the play and casting / role study
or devising a play + character development
weeks 4-6

rehearsal phase w. character + pronunciation work***
week 6-10

(final meeting after the show to watch video)

The students

participants:

ø 12 students

from business and engineering programmes

Germans and internationals mixed (ca. 50:50)

What can this course achieve?

surveys among participants (2010, 2011),
teacher observation:

- self-confidence
- social skills (teamwork)
- intercultural aspects
- speaking
- listening
- pronunciation
- vocabulary
- “fun” (>>increased motivation?)

That's great, but...

- long-term effects (e.g. vocab) not known
- language proficiency at the end of the course was not tested, only self-assessment of learning by students
- hard to eliminate persistent pronunciation mistakes, compromise: general meaning should be understood
- Are long-term, objective assessment of effects needed, with different teachers/locations?

Is BET unique?

situation at German universities:

FL drama clubs



language with/through theatre courses



ESP theatre projects or courses



Why not?

time? preparation time, extra classes

space? need to find space for rehearsal + shows

assessment? possible forms: observation sheets, videos, focus on specific aspects (e.g. pronunciation), related written work

teacher → experience and attitude: needs practical experience and to “believe in it”

The role of the teacher

be familiar with:

drama exercises
directing
project work

be ready to:

work with students in a different role
demonstrate and participate
show confidence in the method
deal with sceptical administration/department/colleagues

A guide to ESP theatre

- 1) What are ESP plays?
- 2) Ideas for course structure / schedule
- 3) Warm-up/icebreaker games
- 4) exercises:
 - a) body language
 - b) voice & breath / pronunciation & articulation
 - c) character development
- 5) related writing exercises
- 6) observation sheets for directors
- 7) check-lists e.g. for tech, marketing

About BET:

Giebert, Stefanie. Drama and theatre in teaching foreign languages for professional purposes", in: Recherche et pratiques pédagogiques en langues de spécialité, Vol. XXXIII Issue 01-2014, 138-150.

Giebert, Stefanie. „Much Ado about Business – Kann man Wirtschaftssprache mit Theaterstücken vermitteln?". In: Scenario. Volume V. Issue 01-2012. 64-84.
<<http://research.ucc.ie/journals/scenario/2012/01/05-giebert-2012-01-de.pdf>>

Giebert, Stefanie. „Shakespeare and Shareholders – A Business English Theatre Project". In: Scenario. Volume V. Issue 01-2011, 40-53.
<<http://research.ucc.ie/journals/scenario/2011/01/04-giebert-2011-01-en.pdf>>

Ressources:

Books

- Bräuer, Gerd. (2002). Body and language - intercultural learning through drama. Westport, Conn.: Ablex Publ.
- Essif, Les (2006): The French Play. Exploring Theatre "Re-creatively" with Foreign Language Students. Calgary: University of Calgary Press .
- Heathfield, David F. (2006) Spontaneous speaking. Repr. Peaslake: Delta Publ.
- Maley, Alan, und Duff, Alan. (2009) Drama techniques. 3. ed., 4. print. Cambridge [u.a.]: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Wilson, Ken. (2008) Drama and improvisation. Resource books for teachers. Oxford: Oxford Univ.
- Winston, Joe. (2012) Second language learning through drama: practical techniques and applications. Routledge.

Articles: please contact me at sgiebert@htwg-konstanz.de and I can send you a bibliography on drama in education/language teaching

Scripts:

Gerngroß, Puchta, Devitt (2012). Get on Stage!: 21 sketches and plays for young learners and teens. Helbling.

Unfortunately, I haven't found a book with scripts for adult learners, but for an idea of what we were working with, here's a selection of BET scripts:

<http://www.stefanie-giebert.de/bet-script-examples/>
(Password: APLIUT2017)

Journals:

Scenario – journal for performative teaching, learning, research:

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/scenario/scenariojournal/>

Online courses

The Drama Teacher Academy:

https://www.theatrefolk.com/drama_teacher_academy

(costs a monthly fee. Aimed at drama teachers)

Networks

The Applied Improvisation Network (mostly trainers and coaches who use improvisation e.g. in corporate trainings, but also some language teachers)

<http://appliedimprovisation.network/>

(They have a very helpful Facebook Group)