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## ROLE PLAY AS A METHOD OF DEVELOPING SPEAKING SKILL

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**РОЛЛИ ЎЙИНЛАР ГАПИРИШ КЎНИКМАСИНИ РИВОЖЛАНТИРИШ МЕТОДИ СИФАТИДА**  
**РОЛЬ ИГРОВЫХ МЕТОДОВ В РАЗВИТИИ НАВЫКОВ ГОВОРЕНИЯ**  
**ROLE PLAY AS A METHOD OF DEVELOPING SPEAKING SKILL**

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**Таянч сўзлар:** ролли ўйин(ролларга бўлиб ўргатиш усули), ёш ўрганувчилар, коммуникатив усуллар, равонлик, тил, ўзаро муносабат, мотивация(қизиқиш уйғотиш), таълим, ролларга шўнғиб кетадиган ўйин, диалог.

**Ключевые слова:** ролевая игра, младшие ученики, коммуникативные методы, беглость, язык, взаимодействие, мотивация, обучение, погружная ролевая игра, диалог.

**Key words:** role play, junior learners, communicative techniques, fluency, language, interaction, motivation, learning, immersion role-playing, dialogue.

*Мақолада тил ўрганувчиларга бахт ва завқ бағишлайдиган, мулоқот қобилиятлари ва нутқ қобилиятларини самарали ривожлантирадиган рол ўйнашнинг барча хусусиятлари илмий жиҳатдан таҳлил қилинган. Ролли ўйин - бу ўқувчиларга адабиётнинг нозик томонларини, ижтимоий тадқиқотлар ва ҳатто фан ёки математиканинг баъзи жиҳатларини тушунишда ёрдам берадиган усул.*

*В статье научно проанализированы все особенности ролевой игры, которая приносит изучающим язык счастье и веселье, эффективно развивает коммуникативные способности и разговорные навыки. Ролевая игра - это методика, которая может использоваться, чтобы помочь учащимся понять более тонкие аспекты литературы, социальных исследований и даже некоторых аспектов естественных наук или математики.*

*In the article all features of Role play bringing language learners to happiness and merriment, developing effectively communicative abilities and speaking skills are scientifically analysed. Role playing is a methodology that may be used to help learners understand the subtler aspects of literature, social studies, and even some aspects of science or mathematics.*

**Introduction.** In recent years, language teaching has focused on the learning process rather than the teaching of the language. The emphasis is not only on linguistic competence of the language learners but also on the development of their communicative ability. In order to develop the learners' communicative ability, the teacher needs to create a scenario to teach the target language in a vibrant, active and interesting manner. Many English teachers are exploring and attempting new and innovative practices in the classroom. They have turned to dialogues, open-ended scenarios, and role plays.

Extended activities in the form of role play, simulations and problem solving are vital in developing the communicative ability of the learners. These activities require the learners to go beyond a text. They require the learners to have a sound understanding of a text and be able to apply their knowledge outside the classroom and their own experiences into the activities.

Role playing clearly promotes effective interpersonal relations and social transactions among participants. "In order for a simulation to occur the participants must accept the duties and responsibilities of their roles and functions, and do the best they can in the situation in which they find themselves" [3]. To fulfill their role responsibilities, learners must relate to others in the simulation, utilizing effective social skills.

Young people also appreciate and enjoy the opportunity to be active participants in their classes. Studies have shown that they are more likely to integrate and remember those things

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that they have learned actively, and that they are more able to apply them to their lives, particularly when conflict or controversy arises.

The role playing method (especially when the "convergent" model is used) meets Skehan's [10] four criteria for task-based instruction: meaning is primary; there is a goal which needs to be worked towards; the activity is outcome-evaluated; there is a real-world relationship. The activities in class, therefore, do not focus on language itself, but on the goals and activities that may be defined by the teacher (if a procedural syllabus is used) or the students (if a process syllabus is used).

**Main body.** Role play is one of different ways to teach foreign language culture. Such words as role play, simulation, drama, and game are sometimes used interchangeably, but, in fact, they illustrate different notions. Some scholars believe that the difference between role play and simulation is in the authenticity of the roles taken by students. Simulation is a situation in which the students play a natural role, in other words, a role that they sometimes have in real life (for example, buying groceries or booking a hotel). In a role play, the students play a part they do not play in real life (for example, Prime Minister, Managing Director of a Multinational Company or a famous singer). The other scholars consider role play as one component or element of simulation. Thus, in a role play, participants assign roles which they act out within scenario. In a simulation, emphasis is on the interaction of one role with the other roles, rather than on acting out individual roles. One way, or the other, role play prepares learners for communication in a different social and cultural context.

Role is a key concept in sociological theory. It highlights the social expectations attached to particular social positions and analyses the workings of such expectations. Role theory was particularly popular during the mid-20 th century, but after sustained criticism came to be seen as flawed and became less widely used. However, the concept of role, properly understood, remains a basic tool for sociological understanding. The structural account of roles locates a position in society, such as that of a teacher, and then tries to describe the standard bundle of rights and duties associated with an ideal type of this position. These expectations, which are socially based, constitute the role.

The term "role" comes from the "rolled-up" script actors used to use over two thousand years ago in Ancient Greece. In time, the script became the part, and actors then were said to play the "role" of Hamlet or Othello or Ophelia or Desdemona. But one can also create a role, improvise a performance, and in fact learners do this all the time in their pretend play. There's a kind of vitality that attends this type of imaginative activity.

Richards and Rodgers (1986) examine three theoretical views of language: structural, functional and interactional. The role playing method follows from the interactional view. This view "sees language as a vehicle for the realization of interpersonal relations and for the performance of social transactions between individuals" [7]. Language teaching content, according to this view, may be specified and organized by patterns of exchange and interaction or may be left unspecified, to be shaped by the inclinations of learners as interactors.

Scarcella and Crookall review research to show how simulation facilitates second language acquisition. Three learning theories which they discuss are that learners acquire language when: (1) they are exposed to large quantities of comprehensible input, (2) they are actively involved, and (3) they have positive affect (desires, feelings and attitudes) [9].

Role playing has several beneficial language learning characteristics and one of the aims of this article is to introduce and discuss the advantages of using role play in teaching English in junior forms. It should be noted that role play and role playing game activities are not limited to language practice as language learning certainly is also taking place during the games. For role playing games to be effective in this way, they should be part of category of language learning techniques. Role-Playing activities offer opportunities for real use of the language.

Role play also provides opportunities for deep learning along with a process for confronting our existing ideas about how and why certain things happen, breaking them down, and offering a new model or set of postulates to replace the old ones.

There can be two ways of looking at language work in similar role plays and role playing games: the pupils manage with the language they already know or they practice with structures

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and functions that have been presented in an earlier part of the lesson, another way, and the pupils can only benefit from the experience.

There are many types of role plays which can be used in primary school classrooms. The goal of all these methods is to engage junior learners in real world thinking and problem solving. One type is called "option display." This method works well for situations where a controversial issue is being addressed where the answer is not very clear. The procedure would be to list the problem/question then construct a display with possible solutions and decide on the proper solution. In a situation like this, pupils can be given role assignments by their teacher; in doing this, the learner is then forced to see the issue as best they can through the eyes of an individual affected by this in a different way from themselves.

Role play is often chosen for creating a situation for junior learners to actively interact in the language, thereby making the language learning more meaningful. At the same time, the learners are introduced the different learning styles - listening, remembering, discussing, writing and presenting.

Role-playing is useful for practicing appropriate behavior in more complex social interactions where students must choose from a wide range of possible behaviors. Good topics for role-playing include sharing materials, including classmates in activities, and supporting someone who makes a mistake. Role-playing allows the teacher to acknowledge the complexity of these situations and give students practice in making responsible choices.

Larsen-Freeman [6] explains that role plays, whether structured or less structured, are important in the communicative approach because they give learners an opportunity to practice communicating in different social contexts and in different social roles.

***A role play is a highly flexible learning activity which has a wide scope for variation and imagination. According to Ladousse [5], role play uses different communicative techniques and develops fluency in the language, promotes interaction in the classroom and increases motivation. Here peer learning is encouraged and sharing of responsibility between teacher and the learner takes place in the learning process.***

Role play can improve learners' speaking skills in any situation, and helps learners to interact. As for the shy learners, role play helps by providing a mask, where learners with difficulty in conversation are liberated. In addition, it is fun and most learners will agree that enjoyment leads to better learning.

Traditionally, learner roles have been specifically defined in the role playing method, either through verbal instructions or role cards. However, Kaplan [4] argues against role-plays that focus solely on prescriptive themes emphasizing specific fields of vocabulary, as they do not capture the spontaneous, real-life flow of conversation.

Perhaps a better model for learner roles in the role playing method is Scarcella (1992) "tapestry approach." Learners, according to this approach, should be active and have considerable control over their own learning. The pupils should help select themes and tasks and provide teachers with details of their learning process. In role playing, this can be achieved through the "design competition" mentioned above, or similar "divergent" simulations.

Pupils have some new responsibilities in role playing that they might not be accustomed to. Burns and Gentry [1], looking at undergraduates learning experientially, suggest that some have not been exposed to experiences requiring them to be proactive and to make decisions in unfamiliar contexts. They recommend that instructors understand the knowledge level that learners bring to the scene, and place close attention to the introduction of experiential exercises so that the student does not become discouraged.

The teacher defines the general structure of the role play, but generally does not actively participate once the structure is set. To quote Jones, "...the teacher becomes the Controller, and controls the event in the same way as a traffic controller, helping the flow of traffic and avoiding bottlenecks, but not telling individuals which way to go." Again, this is consistent with Scarcella (1992) principles. Rather than a traditional, teacher-centered classroom structure, the teacher keeps a relatively low profile and pupils are free to interact with each other spontaneously. This reduces pupil's anxiety and facilitates learning.

The teacher must take on some additional responsibilities in role playing. In particular, the teacher must keep learners motivated by stimulating their curiosity and keeping the material

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relevant, creating, so called, a "tension to learn". As role play represents real-world scenarios, materials should simulate the materials that would be used in the real world. For example, blocks or sugar cubes can be employed in simulating a construction task. In the "extraterrestrial" role play, toothbrushes, watches, light bulbs and keys can be examined by the "aliens."

Role playing can be an interesting way to get pupils more involved in the class. While using role play for teaching pupils the teacher's aim is to suggest which activities would be the easiest for their pupils to do and which would be the most difficult and what other roles and situations would be suitable for role play activities in their classes.

The role playing procedure was described by Ladousse's. Ladousse views procedure has 11 factors in role plays. These factors are: level, time, aim, language, organization, preparation, warm-up, procedure, follow-up, remarks and variations. There are various role playing exercises.

Level indicates the minimum (and sometimes maximum) level at which activities can be carried out. Time may depend on whether learners need to read articles, reports, etc. Aim indicates the broader objective of each activity, such as developing confidence or becoming sensitive to concepts expressed in language.

Language indicates the language the pupils will need, such as structures, functions, different skills, work with register, or intonation patterns. It is important to take to attention whether the activity involves pair work or group work, and how many pupils should be in each group. Preparation indicates anything that needs to be done before class. Warm-up involves ideas to focus the students' attention and get them interested.

Procedure involves a step-by-step guide to the activity. Richards (1985), for example, recommends a six step procedure for role playing: preliminary activity, a model dialogue, learning to perform the role play with the help of role cards, listening to recordings of native speakers performing the role play with role cards, follow-up, and repeating the sequence. However, many role playing procedures do not follow these steps. Other researchers indicate activities that are done after the activity, perhaps as homework. Remarks may be of general interest or may be warnings about special difficulties that may arise. Variations can be used with different types of classes or different levels.

Immersion role-playing is simply taking the idea of paired readings, one in which pupils take on various roles and one with which pupils are familiar, and expanding it into a class-wide or course-wide structure. The pupil ceases to be someone learning English as a second language and instead assumes a persona which he or she constantly uses in the classroom. It is like acting - the learner plays the role. The rules of theater apply in the classroom: don't break character; take your role seriously; be convincing.

It is unlike theater in that there is no audience (except of the teacher). The pupils are acting for themselves, to help them internalize English they are learning or have learned already. Immersion role-playing allows the learners to use English in a setting asreal as possible without going out into the real world and using it. This sample gives young learners more practice with natural English.

The teacher's role in the classroom is to be a guide. He is not teaching new concepts in class; he is not interrupting the flow of role-playing to explain vocabulary or grammar points. This would destroy the atmosphere of acting. Instead, the teacher helps the students find and understand their roles. He might do so by explaining what kind of role it is, give examples; suggest a movie in which such a role is well acted, or do any other number of things that would facilitate a good role-playing.

Expanding on the theme of assuming roles in short conversations, immersion role-playing in the foreign language classroom invites the learners to tackle roles with which they can identify and enjoy. It differs from the traditional role-play dialogues in that it is not one exercise of many in a class; it is the class. It is also unscripted, but that is not to say it is unstructured.

A key motivator in language-learning is interest, interest not only in the language itself but in the method used. Immersion role-playing provides relevance, both topical and learners' interests. If the learner likes to play football, the teacher must let him relax in the classroom by allowing him to assume the role of a professional footballer, perhaps being interviewed by reporters after he has won a championship. It is a very effective method because junior pupils

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like dreaming most of all. So long as the instructor keeps the topic relevant, he need not worry about keeping the students' interest; the class will do that by itself.

Immersion role-playing is a huge undertaking, one in which the instructor is required to make extensive preparation. The dividends of learners' response, interest, and learning, however, will repay well the instructor's labors. The instructor's first task is to evaluate his pupils' interests, fields of expertise. This can be done in simple conversation or by filling out a questionnaire prior to the beginning of the project. Immersion role-playing is, in many respects, acting, so a learner who enjoys acting may branch out well from his areas of experience.

Understanding what his pupils are interested in, the instructor then assigns roles based on the framework he has chosen for the project. Pupils take the given role and research it (whether in English or in their native tongue is irrelevant at this stage). This research is done between classes, and progress is checked by the instructor in the next class or in private interviews with the students or small groups of young learners. The teacher should be prepared to guide pupils who are having difficulty with finding appropriate information regarding their roles. The teacher will also need to provide key vocabulary lists for various roles assigned. Role-playing ought to be enjoyable, but without knowing the words one should use, the project can easily become an exercise in frustration.

Ideally, immersion role-playing should be unscripted, but such extemporaneous speaking might be intimidating for most learners. Therefore, until the pupils are accustomed to the project, the teacher may be required to give more hands-on assistance during the lessons. Preferably, the teacher's presence during the role-playing should be minimal. He can be a moderator and mediator, not a teacher. With their inherent interest in the roles, the teacher may find that the pupils teach themselves, that they take the initiative. As a consequence, the learners will remember what they have learned in this project. Furthermore, they will have a full grasp of the concept and free use of the vocabulary.

It is important to mention drama because role playing uses dramatic devices such as having the players make "asides," comments to the audience that the other characters have to pretend they haven't heard. Another dramatic device, role reversal, involves the players changing parts so they can begin to emphasize with the other's point of view, even if they don't agree. Speaking from different parts of each role helps pupils become more conscious of their ambivalence. These sociodramatic techniques facilitate the degrees of self-expression and, with reflection, thereby deepen the insight obtained for both players and audience. And thus, this procedure can be used in conjunction with another approach which has different roots: drama in education.

Arising from a number of innovators in both the fields of education and the theatre the idea was to foster spontaneous exploration of various situations. This approach has also been called "creative drama," "developmental drama," and similar terms. In England in the 1950s, Peter Slade wrote about the power of drama in his book, 'Child Drama'. This was different from theatrical production - there was to be no script, no fixed lines, and no rehearsals. (Theater traditionally emphasizes written scripts, rehearsals, and an emphasis on the performer rather than participation by the whole group.) Drama in the theatre is concerned with the individuality of individuals, with the uniqueness of each human essence.

Drama in education can be used to teach about various topics in literature, social studies, history, and role playing can be used to enhance these experiences and motivate further study; or role playing can be used in a more constrained, focused way to help learners understand some of the complexities of these subjects. Such experiences may then become a stimulus for more traditional teaching methods, writing and discussion.

Role playing is a technology for intensifying and accelerating learning; it is like electric power tools in relation to carpentry. Just as carpenters have to be skilled in the many components of their craft, so teachers have to be well trained and competent, or therapists well-grounded in the various aspects of that role. The tools aren't panaceas, and they don't work well if used carelessly or as a substitute for actual planning and thinking. And, like power tools, they can be dangerous. But even the old-fashioned types of saws and hammers could do damage if one doesn't know or remember to apply the principles of safety.

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The most common problem with role playing is that the leader's not appreciating its essential nature. It is an improvisational procedure, and improvisation requires a feeling of relative safety. This must be cultivated in a group, the teacher engaging the learners in a "warming-up" process in which they get to know each other in a more trusting fashion and become involved in the theme to be learned. Learning how to warm up a class and how to keep the warm-up going is as much a part of role playing as a surgeon's knowing how to prepare a patient for an operation.

Many pupils have had unpleasant experiences with role playing in fact suffered because the teacher hadn't warmed up the class or those assigned parts to their various roles. The teacher as dramatic producer needs to talk to each of the players, interview them "in role," drawing them out regarding their thoughts about associated aspects of their role, gently involving them imaginatively in the situation.

Another problem comes from the common tendency to assume that interpersonal skills are easier than technical skills-though in fact they are even more difficult-and so teacher tend to think they can engage in directing role playing before they've really achieved a level of bare competence (much less mastery). It's like the way adolescents will say, "oh, yeah, I've got it now" when they have only acquired the most superficial knowledge, whether it will be in driving a car or doing some household task. Well, sometimes teachers fail to appreciate the complexity of a skill they're learning, and it's important to emphasize that directing role playing is about as complex as learning how to deliver a baby. And it helps if the person doing the learning is also trained in other ways.

It is a commonly accepted cliche that every teacher wants to teach young people to think, but thinking at any level of complexity requires an exercise of three interdependent component categories of skills: problem-solving; communications; and self-awareness. These skills cannot be learned by reading any number of books, although a little didactic material can be helpful in creating an intellectual framework for the accommodative learning. Rather, the kinds of skills needed for flexible, creative, rational thinking must be exercised, practiced, and learned in a process of interaction, risk-taking, self-expression, feedback, encouragement.

One of these activities is role play which is a way of bringing situations from real life into the classroom. When the role play is doing the teacher asks learners to imagine. They may imagine:

- a role, in other words, they pretend to be a different person; suitable roles for primary school classes would be people familiar to learners from everyday life, for example, parents, brothers, sisters, teachers, shopkeepers, characters from textbook, and from other books or from television, etc.

- a situation - they pretend to be doing something different, for example, planning a holiday; situations which pupils see or take part in everyday life, for example, shopping, holidays, using local transport, asking the way to places, 'fantasy' situations from stories they read, or from the textbook.

- both a role and a situation (for example, a police officer is asking about a lost bag);

In role play pupils improvise. The situation is fixed, but they make up the exact words to say as they go along. So reading a dialogue aloud is not the same as role play.

In role play the participants speak and react individually and they are allotted individual roles, which may be written out on cards. For example: role card **a**: you are a customer in a cake shop, you want a birthday cake for a friend, he or she is very fond of chocolate; role card **b**: you are a shop assistant in a cake shop, you have many kinds of cake, but not chocolate cake.

Very often the role play is done in pairs, as in the above example; sometimes it involves interaction between five or six different roles. Normally, the groups or pairs improvise their role play between themselves, simultaneously, with no audience.

Role play is virtually the only way that can give learners the opportunity to practice improvising a range of real life spoken language in the classroom, and is an extremely effective technique if the learners are confident and cooperative; but more inhibited or anxious people find role play difficult and sometimes even embarrassing. Factors that can contribute to role play's success are: making sure that the language demanded is well within the learner's capacity; teacher's enthusiasm; careful presentation and instructions.

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The technique of teaching language by the method of Role-Playing is getting together with some friends to write a story. It's joining around a campfire or dining room to spin some tall tales. Role-playing is being creative and having fun with friends.

**In more complex** role play the activities of the teacher may be more detailed and pupils' activities may be more defined. The teacher might, for example, explain a handout or have the learners read a case study defining the situation, and role play cards (which describe the role which the pupils are to play) might be distributed. Such role play can be applied to teaching language in many areas.

In most role-playing games, one person plays the 'referee,' who can be thought of as the 'Editor' of the story. The teacher will describe a world, or setting. Pupils will take a character and protagonist in this world, and guide their character through the story that they are creating.

Role play is the method which in primary school used as games and it has called role-playing games. First, role-playing games should be distinguished from Language Role Plays, Classroom Dramas, and other more commonly employed classroom language learning exercises which teachers attending the conference may be more familiar with. Role-playing games are games played on a tabletop with pencil, paper, dice (often polyhedral), and a large dose of imagination (unlike the more usual language role plays which are acted out before a class, these games are non-performance oriented). Players can be divided into two types: the referee (Game Master) and the players. The Game Master creates a scenario which he then sets in motion by explaining the situation to the players who have created Player Characters to interact with one another and the Game Master's characters (Non-Player Characters) during the game. Following a set of rules or guidelines, players determine the success of their actions by rolling dice and consulting tables. Sometimes players will use miniature figures placed upon the tabletop to represent themselves in the game.

Basically, role-playing games are Interactive Stories in which the Game Master furnishes the basic plot elements (often based in fantastic or heroic genres) and the players shape the narrative through their actions within the context of the game. The game is played through the verbal interchange of the players, making it ideal for language learners.

Some researchers compare role-playing games with a sort of fairy tale written by a committee without an opportunity to re-write. Role-playing forms are more like historical novels, adventure yarns, science fiction, etc.; but the mechanics are still the same as in traditional role play.

Role-playing games are very suitable for young learners which react very painfully when they lost because they are cooperative games and don't have winners or losers in the traditional sense of the terms. In most games - board games, card games, and dice games - there is a clearly defined way to win, and a clearly defined way to lose, and winning is the goal of the game. In role-playing games the concepts of winning and losing do not exist. The goal as a player is to help to create a story and to have fun. Learners may give their character other goals, but the success of their character does not determine any sense of winning or losing. Like life, it's not so much important whether they win or lose, but it is important how they play the game. Players don't compete against one another; they cooperate in fighting the monsters or overcoming other obstacles created by the Game Master. They also play against chance.

Sadow[8] gives an interesting example of pupil and teacher activities in a simple role play. The teacher tells the class that they are extraterrestrials who, for the first time, are coming into contact with earthly objects such as toothbrushes, watches, light bulbs and keys. Without reference to human civilization, the participants must draw conclusions about the objects' function. This role play, or similar creative, imaginative activities, will stimulate pupils to use their imagination and challenge them to think and speak as well.

Language teaching can be an interesting challenge when teachers make the effort to explore a variety of approaches. Role play is just one of many methods available for exploitation. With some attention given to the needs of the learners, both the teacher and the learners can play active roles in the classroom, making language classes livelier, challenging and above all rewarding.

**Conclusion.** So, role play increases motivation. Always talking about real life can become very dull, and the chance to imagine different situations adds interest to a lesson. Role play



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gives a chance to use language in new contexts and for new topics. Children and even teenagers and adults often imagine themselves in different situations and roles when they play games. So by using role play in class teachers are building on something that learners naturally enjoy. It is an effective method of teaching foreign language young learners because 'fun' must be the most important part in teaching them.

Role play is meaningful and why it is important because they are 'acting out' a situation, role play encourages pupils to use natural expressions and intonation, as well as gesture. Role play is an activity which can be based on a dialogue or text and it can be free activity.

For having effective role play learners should be active and have considerable control over their own learning. Learners should be active when the teacher organizes an interesting lesson, otherwise the teacher will not be able to make pupils be active.

In addition to its integration in the ordinary classroom, these methods can also be used synergistically with special programs for children "at risk." Some children have special needs; some are physically, emotionally, or developmentally disabled; and some are simply not the kinds of children who do well in traditional classrooms and need a more active, multi-modal, experiential approach. Again, role playing in itself is no panacea, any more than the new "scope" technologies now revolutionizing surgery can be effectively applied by people with little training. These are tools, and in good hands, they can powerfully enhance the attainment of the teachers' goals. The movement towards social and emotional learning in the schools and the promotion of emotional intelligence also should make use of this valuable resource.

Role playing is a methodology that may be used to help learners understand the subtler aspects of literature, social studies, and even some aspects of science or mathematics. Further, it can help them become more interested and involved, not only learning about the material, but learning also to integrate the knowledge in action, by addressing problems, exploring alternatives, and seeking novel and creative solutions. Role playing is the best way to develop the skills of initiative, communication, problem-solving, self-awareness, and working cooperatively in teams, and these are above all - certainly above the learning of mere facts.

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