
The Teacher as Remote Theatre Director: an intercultural exploration

Webinar handout

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What is remote theatre?

Performing plays remotely using video conferences tools like Zoom to an audience whether this performance is synchronous (live on Zoom) or asynchronous (recorded). Intercultural remote theatre is when you do this with groups of learners from diverse countries and cultures. The three initial stages of rehearsing an intercultural remote theatre play on Zoom are first to select the play, then to hold an orientation session and technical training, then finally to work on a variety of rehearsal techniques (Leach, 2013). What follows are activities and stagings that you can use to set up your own intercultural remote theatre.

Stages of the orientation session

Icebreaker activities: learners start by introducing themselves with their names and expressing a movement or mime that reflects their personality. Optionally, learners can share their hobbies and interests.

Introduction to play rehearsal: both teachers guide learners through the process of rehearsing a play via Zoom.

Schedule agreement: teachers and learners collaborate to establish a timetable for rehearsals.

Technical training: teachers conduct technical training on Zoom for learners, covering utilizing a green screen and virtual backgrounds, sharing computer sound, managing camera presence on and off the stage, incorporating body movements and props, adjusting lighting and sound settings.

Breakout room practice: teachers divide learners into breakout rooms and ask them to explore Zoom features by practicing with a short excerpt from a play.

Rehearsal techniques and activities

Joint discussion: both teachers facilitate a discussion with both groups in the same Zoom room to brainstorm ideas related to the play.

Line exploration: both teachers encourage learners to guess the play's lines and improvise them based on the discussed themes.

Breakout room improvisation: both teachers assign learners to breakout rooms to engage in improvisational activities with each other.

Script fill-in: both teachers present the initial excerpt from the digital script, containing blanks, and prompt learners to fill in the missing parts.

Script reveal: both teachers unveil the correct words and then provide learners with the complete script.

In-text references:

Leach, R. (2013). *Theatre Studies: The Basics* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Routledge.

Maley, A., & Duff, A. (2005). *Drama Techniques: A Resource Book of Communication Activities for Language Teachers* (3rd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

A recording of Haneen's webinar can be watched here:

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/news-and-events/webinars/webinars-teachers/stories-classroom-mini-event>

*The webinar recording contains excerpts from plays published in the following publications:

Various authors (2019). *Welcome to earth and other plays*. Online: Hands Up Project.

- Extract from the improvised play of *I Can Smell Her* by students from Gaza Elementary B school (slide 20, 21 - minutes 36:19 and 38:34)
- Extract from the play *The shadow girl* by Haneen Jadallah and her students (Slides 22 – from minute 36:20)

Bilborough, N. (2021). *Doing remote theatre*. Online: Hands Up Project.

- Extract from the play *A passport for what?* by Benjamin Zephaniah (Slides 26 – from minute 46:32)
- Extract from *The wise man and the bee* by Alan Maley (slide 25 – from minute 43:06)
