

6

Nursery rhymes and rhymes; poems and poetry

Goal

Working with verses, rhymes and poems is valuable for the most varied aspects of language development (articulation, vocabulary, syntactical repertoire, literary education, etc). This can and should be practiced at all age levels, ranging from the simple nursery rhyme in kindergarten to the discussion of lyric poetry at the upper level. The following suggestions are limited to the introduction of nursery rhymes and rhymes in kindergarten and the lower level classes.

KiGa–3. Kl.

10–15 Min.



Materials:
appropriate verses,
rhymes and poems.

Hints:

- The nursery rhymes and rhymes that are well-known in every culture, are in fact more important for language development than it would appear at first sight. With their rhythmical structure that stimulates repeating the words, they help to absorb and polish not only words, but whole phrases in a playful, almost suggestive manner. Thus, they contribute to the development of articulation, vocabulary and language structures. A similar process occurs by working with poems in the upper level classes. The students not only become acquainted with an important treasure from their culture; by working with lyrical texts, they also learn specific possibilities and nuances of language use that far surpass what they know from everyday language use. To afford the students these possibilities and make these dimensions accessible to them is no easy task, but an important and beautiful one. How well and successfully this can be accomplished can be seen, among others, in the impressive recitals by many HLT classes from southwestern Europe. See also #29.
- Reference: Silvia Hüsler (2009) (see Bibliographic references).

Possible sequence:

- The students sit or stretch out on the floor, relaxed and with their eyes closed.
- The instructor recites the verse or rhyme in a slow, clear and loud voice.
- All students now sit in a circle. Together they discuss what they have heard, words they did not understand, and what internal images surfaced.
- Depending on the kind of verse or rhyme, the class collectively creates gestures, movements, etc. to go with the presentation of the verses.
- The instructor recites the verse or rhyme once more and performs the created movements. The children imitate the instructor's movements.
- As soon as they want, the children may participate and recite as well. In the closing phase, the instructor may take him/herself very far back from the recital.

Variants:

- Introduction by reciting the verse/rhyme at a certain point in time: if the verse/rhyme is designed as an aid to a function (e. g. tidying up), it will be useful if the instructor always recites it in this situation. The children thus absorb it unknowingly and will in time recite and repeat it themselves on this occasion.
- Introduction through pictures (e. g. rhymes with animals): the instructor assembles pertinent pictures that can be used as an aid to orientation and support.
- As a change, older students may assume the introduction of a verse or rhyme.

Comments:

- The rhyme must be repeated various times, so that the children may eventually recite it on their own.
- Movements and gestures help to store the words. They serve as a reminder and orientation help to children if they don't remember how the verse/rhyme continue.

7

Rapid -speak verses, playful language

Goal

Rapid-speak verses or tongue twisters (Zungenbrecher or Schnabelwetzler in German) together with other children's verses and playful language activities (see #6) are an integral part of almost all languages. The "work" with them is playful and amusing, while simultaneously promoting careful listening and precise articulation.

KiGa–3. Kl.

5–10 Min.



Materials:

Tongue twisters in one's native language; collected by the teacher and the students.

References:

Tongue twisters in various languages can be found, for example, under <https://www.heilpaedagogik-info.de/zungenbrecher/287-zungenbrecher-deutsch-sprueche.html>

Procedure:

- The instructor presents a tongue twister and practices reciting it with the students part by part.
- The students practice the tongue twister individually, in pairs or in groups.

Variants:

- The instructor recites the tongue twister 2–3 times and prompts the students to reproduce it themselves, based on their listening comprehension (a less systematic approach than the above).
- The students bring their own tongue twisters to class and teach it to the other children.
- A collection project would be an excellent framework, whereby the students collect and write down tongue twisters and other playful language manifestations from among the family and relatives for the purpose of producing a booklet and audio file (CD, MP3). Moreover, this project could be easily coordinated with mainstream education classes and other language groups. See chapter 4 in the introduction.

Comments:

- Tongue twisters are demanding. Even adults and students with good oral competences may at least initially have difficulties with tongue twisters and must concentrate. Nevertheless, they serve as a good and fun introduction to a lesson, as well as a loosening-up activity in between or at the end of a lesson.
- In order to raise the students' competence level commensurate with the stated goals of the activity, it is important to attempt a nearly perfect reciting of the tongue twisters, the playful character of the activity notwithstanding.