



TI-AIE

Learning English in the creative arts

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What this unit is about

This unit explores some ways to teach English through art, craft and drama.

The creative arts can make learning English fun and interesting. Students of all ages enjoy making things and being active. Incorporating English into art, craft and drama activities can motivate students to express themselves in English. In these kinds of activity you can practise and develop your own language skills along with students.

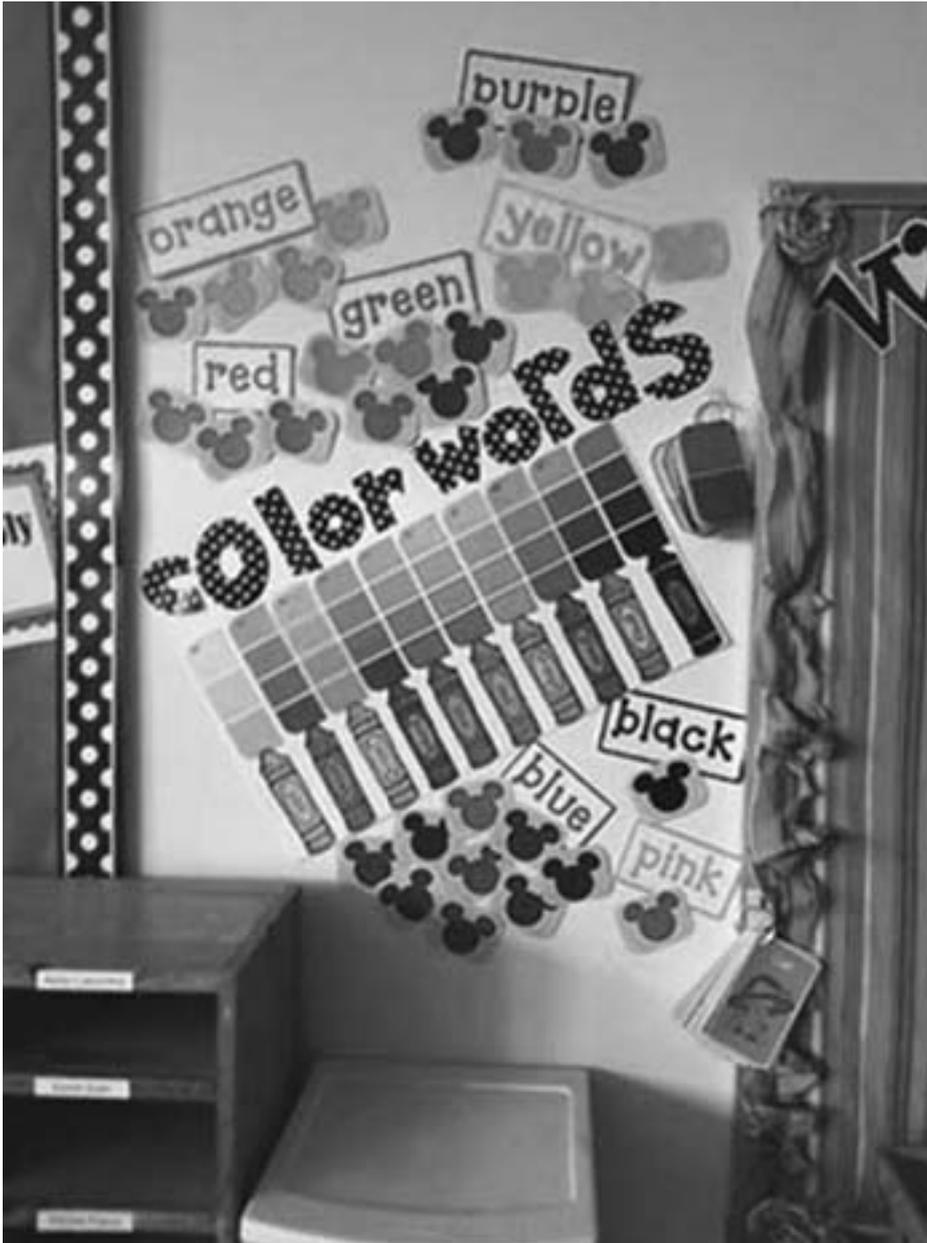
The unit suggests how your English textbook can be a resource for creative activities that can reinforce and extend language learning.

What you can learn in this unit

- To use art and craft to stimulate English language learning.
- To use drama and role play to stimulate English language learning.
- To develop art, craft and drama activities from textbook lessons.

1 Using art and craft to stimulate English language learning

Creative arts lessons are hands-on and active for students. Language learned and used in these sessions can be memorable. In the first case study, the teacher takes notice of how students use language generally in art and craft lessons, and decides to incorporate English into these activities.



Language in art and craft lessons.

Case Study 1: Mrs Pooja uses art to develop spoken English

Mrs Pooja, a new teacher in Class V, was not very confident about teaching English. During her pre-service teacher training she had done Hindi pedagogy, but had not opted for 'pedagogy of English'.

My assessments showed that very few students had learnt any English since Class 1. I thought back to my pre-service training, when I observed students learning Hindi during art and craft activities. I decided to try out the same strategy for English lessons.

From my English textbook, I chose a story that had many different animal characters. I had students make masks and costumes for the animals in the story.

Before the students started to create their masks and costumes, I wrote some vocabulary in English on the blackboard:

- **Art words:** 'colour', 'cut', 'paste', 'material', 'paint', 'draw', 'shape'.
- **Animals:** 'monkey', 'tiger', 'deer', 'pig', 'frog', 'fish'.
- **Adjectives:** 'old', 'young', 'small', 'big', 'bright', 'dark', 'brown', 'orange', 'black', 'green', 'striped', 'slippery', 'shiny'.

I had the students repeat the words after me, in English. I used the textbook pictures and my own gestures to make sure they understood.

As the students worked on their masks and costumes, I encouraged them to use the English words as much as possible with me and with each other. As they worked, I also used English for making suggestions, agreement or disagreement, and descriptions. For instance:

- 'Try this ...'
- 'That's a good idea!'
- 'Is it hard or soft?'
- 'What colour is this?'
- 'Please give him/her the paint.'
- 'It's very beautiful!'
- 'I like it very much!'
- 'Do you like it?'
- 'Show me ... Show [other student's name].'

If my students didn't understand a word or sentence in English, I would repeat what I said in Hindi. I encouraged the students to practise the English sentences with me and with each other as they made masks and costumes. It was good practise for my own English.

At the end of the art lesson I asked students to write words and sentences in their notebooks, in English, to describe their masks and costumes. For example:

- 'My mask is red and orange. It is a lion.'
- 'My costume is shiny and green. I am a crocodile.'

While correcting their notebooks, I noticed that all the students had attempted to write, including one who had been diagnosed as dyslexic.

