

# Demo:Dram Workshops

## Crossing Borders

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### Demo:Dram Workshop summary

During their English class students read texts relevant to current affairs, more specifically they read a text on the topic of immigrants and refugees. This particular extract is taken from Unit 13 (Crossing Borders) in *The New Outsiders* by A. Kane (2009). The intended level of lexical difficulty of the text is C1, according to the Common European Framework for Languages. On this text and the ideas expressed, drama techniques will be applied. Students will select three moments/images of the text and re-create still images, they will role play the main characters identified in the text and finally they will do the consciousness alley.

If you want to emigrate, which country would you move to? Why? Would you be allowed to live there legally/permanently? What would you have to offer? What problems would you encounter? (Think about language, prejudice, culture shock, homesickness, freedom to travel, citizenship.) How might these problems be exacerbated if you were undocumented? (Kane 2009).

### Target audience

3rd grade junior high school students (14-15 years old)

Students have reached a C1 linguistic level (preparing for the C2 exam – Proficiency)

### What are the aims/overall goals of the workshop?

General learning aims:

- Understanding of current affairs and related concepts on the topic of refugees and immigrants in particular.
- Development of students' empathy through theatre techniques.

Specific linguistic aims:

- Vocabulary consolidation
- Reading comprehension skills.

### What are the objectives/stages of the workshop?

Stage 1: reading the text so as to fully comprehend both the concepts discussed and the vocabulary.

Stage 2: application of theatre techniques.

Students are evaluated throughout their active participation in the process.

### Why this workshop; what is the rationale?

The topic was selected because it is current affairs and activates students' social understanding. It relates to the democratic classroom since students are engaged critically, realize what is going on around them and are invited to reflect upon their unique identity within a social group or community. Students ought to transcend themselves and attempt to stand in other people's shoes, comprehend the difficulties encountered and contemplate how democracy is defined within a society. How should the individual act and contribute to a democratic society?

### Description of workshop process: what we did and how we did it

The text refers to a family of Mexican immigrants who live in great poverty in the United States. While the mother and three kids are legal immigrants, the father has illegally crossed the borders and hence, is constantly on the alert so as not to be arrested by the police. His worst fears are realized when police officers force their way in the family's house and detain the father. This leads to a series of events, actions and emotional reactions for the entire family, both the parents and children.

We view the unfolding of events through a theatrical perspective. We emphasize on 3 events, with the moment of the father's arrest being the focal point. Also, we raise a few important questions such as:

- What happens before the arrest?
- How is the family? How do they celebrate the daughter's birthday?
- How does the arrest take place?
- How do the members of the family feel? Are they afraid/hopeful/desperate?
- What happens next?

Students assume roles and role-play the scenario given in the text.

The *consciousness alley* focuses on the father of the story.

The text to be used is drawn from a course book titled *Outsiders C 1*: Kane, A. (2009). *The New Outsiders: CEF Level C 1: First-year Proficiency*. London: Hillside Press.

### Post workshop ideas

Students reflected on the process and the theatre techniques used. They evaluated their comprehension not only of the text but also of themselves as individuals in a democratic society:

- How did the experience affect your learning?
- From the experience, what has been modelled for you that you found interesting?
- How did the experience challenge your thinking?
- How did the experience engage you?







**Further reading:**

Kane, A. (2009). *The New Outsiders: CEF Level C1: First-year Proficiency*. London: Hillside Press.  
Kanira, E. et al (2018, February 1). *Democracy through Drama* [Scholarly project]. In *Demo:Dram*.  
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