In this issue's feature lesson plan, you'll find several poetry terms. See if you can find them, and others, in the word search below. The terms may be printed vertically, horizontally, or diagonally.

Alliteration Assonance Ballad Couplet
Haiku Imagery Kenning Limerick
Metaphor Onomatopoeia Personification Rhyme
Simile Story Verse

Answers on page 26
Naturally, the first exercise could be continued with this exercise as well; however, this way is more challenging than having to continue a story that already has a conclusion.

A follow-up for this exercise could be that the students act out their stories in class. After acting out a story, they could continue it as a role-play activity.

Role-plays are useful for providing the teacher with feedback on how well the students learnt the new language (grammar, vocabulary, etc.). Besides, this activity reduces Teacher Talking Time and facilitates the speech of the students. It is generally true that people are less inhibited to talk when they have a personality “to hide behind,” so when they play a role, they tend to forget about the surrounding circumstances (i.e., the classroom or the presence of the teacher).

Activity 4

Another interesting (and slightly more complex) exercise is to organise students into groups and give them a written story with missing information. First the groups should discuss what might be missing from the text. Then the teacher gives them a comic strip version of the text. They must fill in the blanks in the written story by describing what they see in the pictures. After that, they are asked to think of speech and/or thought bubbles for the comic strip. Naturally, as a follow-up activity, they can act it out and continue the story as a role-play.

The variations of these kinds of activities are almost endless. They can be combined with other activities, or used as supplementary material.

Conclusion

Comic strips are not only for fun in a language class, but there are also methodological reasons for teachers to use them. According to Oller’s episode hypothesis, a text that has a story line and a logical structure is easier to remember and to recall. Comics strips provide the structure and stimulus to which students respond, and, as Brown points out, since stories are universal, students from different cultures can understand their structure and can identify with the characters (Brown 1994), which helps them to acquire vocabulary, grammatical and communicative competence, and provides them with special cultural knowledge as well.

References


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