



George and the Whopper

*A workshop for students
in the LGA3104 Plays and
Drama for Young Learners
course at IPGKDRI, 2013.*

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A workshop for students in the LGA3104 Plays and Drama for Young Learners course at IPGKDRI, 2013.

Introduction

Students in the LGA3104 Plays and Drama for Young Learners (PISMP Semester 5) course have already practised adapting a children's story into a play.

For the purposes of this workshop, the story "George and the Whopper" (McTrusty, 2011), available from the Self-Access room in TELTTrAC at IPGKDRI, has been adapted into a children's play. The adaptation is available in Appendix 1 of this module.

The students have asked to see a demonstration of teaching drama to children, as Language Arts is a new addition to Primary School English in the KSSR syllabus. This workshop is in response to that request. However, the following possibilities are being considered ahead of the workshop:

- We are unsure how these children will react to an unknown teacher, especially a foreigner, and it's possible that they may just 'freeze'.
- Hearing English spoken by a native English speaker may surprise the children who have only ever had Malaysian teachers.
- Having observers in the room hopefully will not prove a distraction because these children are in the 'Teaching School' and have been subjects of 'Micro-teaching' sessions with IPG students in the past.

With such a short session only a few examples can be demonstrated, and the normal steps of a lesson will not be strictly adhered to – and normally these might be done over a series of lessons.

Objectives

Workshop participants (IPG students, IPG lecturers and Primary School Teachers) will:

- Investigate a play adapted from a children's story book ("George and the Whopper").
- Consider possible teaching points from the story and play.
- Observe drama activities that lead up to the performance of the play by the children.
- Discuss strategies and activities.

KSSR Learning Standards. The children will be:

- 4.1.2 Able to recite jazz chants and poems with correct pronunciation, rhythm and intonation.
- 4.2.1 Able to respond to a) characters b) place with guidance.
- 4.3.2 Able to perform with guidance based on: a) jazz chants b) poems c) stories.

Materials Required

- A suitable room (the school library or multimedia room) with space for a class of children as well as about IPG 20 students observing.
- A class of primary school students, and their teacher.
- Participants need to have a copy of this module.
- Visual Aids for vocabulary. (pictures and/or realia)
- Props for the play: table, 3 chairs, plates, clock with moveable hands, pot plant, watering can, sign with "Thursday", 2 phones. (Note: Other than the table and chairs, these can all be 'fake'.)
- Awards for George's vegetables: normal, big, huge.
- Name cards: Prime Minister, Prime Minister's Assistant, Premier, Mayor, Mayor's Wife, Mrs Crabapple.

Timing

The workshop is a 2-hour session.

The first part of the session is a briefing for the observers (IPG students). In the second part the children will be involved in the Language Arts lesson.

Procedures

Briefing for Participants

The participants will be reminded of following points:

1. In writing the adaptation, the use of a Narrator has been avoided. A narrator is often included (especially in children's plays) to cover parts of the story that cannot be simply told through speech and action, and sometimes as a means to shorten and simplify the story. In Reader's Theatre the narrator is often split into several parts to give different children a turn at reading. However, as a general rule, using a narrator causes the play to slow down and it can become boring.
2. This is a Language Arts lesson, not a Reading lesson. Some children find reading difficult, and being asked to read can greatly reduce their enjoyment of the lesson. Therefore, as much as possible, the necessity to read has been avoided in this lesson plan.
3. In the first part of the lesson, the children will be presented with vocabulary they need to understand and enjoy the story and the play, including not only nouns but some adjectives and related expressions.
4. There is a strong emphasis on correct pronunciation, rhythm and expression in speech, including some use of body language. This is a very important part of Language Arts.

5. Children get to practice at least some of the lines in a group or with the whole class – this is a safe way to improve pronunciation to avoid problems of ‘shyness’ and the fear of being heard to be incorrect. More confident children will be eager to take lead, individual parts. Children should be (firmly and) gently encouraged, but not forced into a situation where they feel foolish or embarrassed. However, every child should be participating at least at one point.

6. All materials and props need to be prepared ahead of time and handy.

7. The children do not need to understand every word in the story or play, and they don’t need to understand every word the teacher says. It is important for the teacher to keep the children’s attention, to speak clearly, and to use visual aids, actions and expression to make sure the children understand enough to enjoy the lesson. The teacher will know whether they are understanding sufficiently by the expression on their faces and their reactions to commands (rather than “do you understand?”) which may indicate that something needs to be repeated or restated. The children do not need explanations in Bahasa Melayu.

Language Arts Lesson – Before Learning the Play

Before telling the story or working through the play, the children must be familiar with the most important vocabulary. It is important to remember that they do not necessarily need to know every single word. Pictures, realia and actions are used to help the children understand the words.

Vocabulary

1. The children learn (or revise) the word ‘vegetables’ – and its correct pronunciation. The word could be written on a flashcard or on the board, but the emphasis is on hearing rather than reading the word.

Teacher asks children suggest names of vegetables. Pictures and/or actual vegetables are shown to the children to check understanding and discuss briefly which ones they like/dislike.

[Children should be familiar with the word “vegetables”, and the names of vegetables available locally such as broccoli, cauliflower, carrot, cucumber, lettuce, tomato.]

NOTE: pronunciation – / 'vedʒtəblz/. Avoid letting the word rhyme with the word ‘table’. The second ‘e’ elides and the ‘a’ is a schwa.

2. They should also know the names of some less healthy fast foods such as chips. Use a picture or real chips to briefly mention less healthy options.

Adjectives: Tasty, healthy.

Quantities: spoonful, (cupful, bowlful, handful)

a chip, some chips lots of chips, too many chips

Preferences: I like, I love, I hate

Days of the week – Thursday

Time – 5 minutes, 10 minutes

award, town, state, country, big, huge, good, better, best

Body Language

Showing emotions – give a funny look, look in surprise, look puzzled, scratching his head ...

Speaking without opening your mouth

Intonation

Reacting to Information

I haven't a clue

No way!

Good for you!

What? Never!

Speaking 'aside'

This is a theatrical device which the children can learn to use and enjoy, talking to the audience as if the other actors cannot hear them, expressing their inner thoughts. These asides should be loaded with intonation, maybe in a loud 'stage whisper', and obvious facial expressions

Sequences

Children learn a Jazz Chant using the sequence in the play about George's award for his vegetables:

* * * *
George's vegetables are soooooo good!

* * * *
[clapping]

* * * *
George's vegetables are the best in TOWN!

* * * *
He'll receive an award!

* * * *
George's vegetables are the best in the STATE!

* * * *
He'll receive a BIG award!

* * * *
George's vegetables are the best in the COUNTRY!

* * * *
He'll receive a HUGE award.

* * * *
[clapping]

Children practice a simple **sequence of events** from the gossip sequence in the play:

1. 6 Children line up,
2. give their names,
3. pass a message along. "___ (child's name)___ is receiving an award!"
4. Ask the last child "How do you know?"
5. Try more sets of children.
6. Give the last set of children name tags: Prime Minister, Prime Minister's Assistant, Premier, Mayor, Mayor's Wife, Mrs Crabapple (*practise saying this name*).

My assistant told me. The Premier told him. The Mayor told the Premier. The Mayor's wife told the Mayor. And, I believe, a lady from town, Mrs Crabapple, told the Mayor's wife.

Language Arts Lesson - Telling the Story

The children are told (or read) the whole story, stopping to discuss important points along the way.

Language Arts Lesson - Starting the Play

The play could be used as "Reader's Theatre" in a reading lesson, and/or eventually produced as a full play for an audience of parents. There are some steps that can be moved through to start preparing the children for a production.

1. Choral Speaking

Initially the children could give responses to lines from the play as a group or as the whole class.

TEACHER: You're getting older. You eat too many chips. It's time you started eating vegetables.
CHILDREN: I HATE vegetables!

And then get 3 children (or groups) to say the first part:

CHILD 1: You're getting older.

CHILD 2: You eat too many chips.
CHILD 3: It's time you started eating vegetables.
REST OF CLASS: I HATE vegetables!

2. Intonation and actions

The children can practice the following exchange with intonation and physical expression.

GIRLS: (*Mime putting big spoonful onto George's plate.*) Try them!
BOYS: (*Mouth shut tight. Shakes head.*) MMM! MMM!
GIRLS: Vegetables are very good for you, and very tasty!
BOYS: They don't look good. And I'm sure they don't taste good either. (*Shut mouth tight.*)

3. Cameos

At this stage, children can practise short sections of the play. Several different groups can try the same section, and they can talk through it together in a group. It can be given to them on a piece of paper, but it's better if they just learn the lines right away and the teacher or other students can prompt them – and it's ok if they ad lib a little bit.

Cameo 1 – Mum, Dad, George

MUM: George, you're getting older. You eat too many chips. It's time you started eating vegetables.
GEORGE: (*aside*) I HATE vegetables!
DAD: (*Putting big spoonful onto George's plate.*) Try them!
GEORGE: (*Mouth shut tight. Shakes head.*)
MUM: Vegetables are very good for you, and very tasty!
GEORGE: They don't look good. And I'm sure they don't taste good either. (*Shut mouth tight.*)

Cameo 2 – Mum, Dad, George, Lance

LANCE: Hello Everyone!
MUM: Hello Lance.
DAD: Hello Lance.
GEORGE: (*Not opening lips.*) Mmmmmm-o mmmmmnce.
Lance gives George a funny look.
LANCE: Is George ready to go to the movies?
GEORGE: Yes!
DAD: (*Crossly*) No, he is not.
MUM: He refuses to eat his vegetables.
DAD: And he is not going anywhere until he eats them.
GEORGE: Vegetables are yucky. (*Shuts mouth tight.*)

Cameo 3 – Mrs A, Mrs B, Mrs Crabapple, the Mayor's Wife

MRS A: Aahhh! That's a lovely cup of tea. And these pumpkin biscuits are nice. Did you make them, Mrs B?

MRS B: Yes, I did. My parsley and mint have grown so big already. And my other vegetables will win a prize for sure at the garden show.

MRS CRABAPPLE: George's vegetables are so good that the Prime Minister is coming here on Thursday to give him an award.

MRS B: No! Really?

The MAYOR'S WIFE: My husband hasn't said anything about a visit, and he is the Mayor!

MRS CRABAPPLE: George told me himself The Prime Minister will be here Thursday night.

Cameo 4 – George, Prime Minister

GEORGE: (*Taps the Prime Minister in the arm.*) Are you going to eat your vegetables?

PRIME MINISTER: (*Shakes his head.*) I am the leader of the country. I don't have to eat vegetables if I don't want to. (*Towards kitchen, shouting.*) And I don't want to!

GEORGE: (*Softly.*) Maybe vegetables are good for us. Maybe they are tasty. I think we should try the vegetables.

PRIME MINISTER: What? Never!

GEORGE: But if you don't eat your vegetables, no-one will.

Language Arts Lesson - The Whole Play

If there is still time – or at a later opportunity – the children could read through the play aloud, those without parts could just watch and/or follow in their scripts.

Appendix 1 – Playscript

George and the Whopper

A play adapted from the book by Chris McTrusty

Cast:

GEORGE

MUM

DAD

LANCE – George's best friend.

MRS CRABAPPLE – lives down the street, a widow, a friend of George.

The MAYOR

The MAYOR'S WIFE

MRS A - Garden Club member

MRS B – Garden Club member

The STATE PREMIER

PRIME MINISTER'S ASSISTANT

The PRIME MINISTER

The PRIME MINISTER'S WIFE

Scene 1: Dinner table – George, MUM and Dad are eating dinner.

MUM: George, you're getting older. You eat too many chips. It's time you started eating vegetables.

GEORGE: *(aside)* I HATE vegetables!

DAD: *(Putting big spoonful onto George's plate.)* Try them!

GEORGE: *(Mouth shut tight. Shakes head.)*

MUM: Vegetables are very good for you, and very tasty!

GEORGE: They don't look good. And I'm sure they don't taste good either. *(Shut mouth tight.)*

Knock at the back door. Enter Lance.

LANCE: Hello Everyone!

MUM: Hello Lance.

DAD: Hello Lance.

GEORGE: *(Not opening lips.)* Mmmmmm-o mmmmmnce.

Lance gives George a funny look.

LANCE: Is George ready to go to the movies?

GEORGE: Yes!

DAD: *(Crossly)* No, he is not.

MUM: He refuses to eat his vegetables.

DAD: And he is not going anywhere until he eats them.

GEORGE: Vegetables are yucky. *(Shuts mouth tight.)*

Everyone looks at the clock. Ticking noise. Five minutes pass ... everyone sighs. Ten minutes pass.

Dad stands up and goes to the telephone.

DAD: You leave me no choice. *(Starts to punch in numbers. Talking on the phone.)* Hello! I would like to speak to the Prime Minister, please.

Mum, George, and Lance all turn and look in surprise at the audience.

LANCE: *(to George)* Why is your dad calling the Prime Minister?

GEORGE: I don't know.

DAD: *(Covering mouthpiece of phone.)* If George won't eat his vegetables when we ask him, maybe he will when the Prime Minister asks him.

LANCE: Wow!

GEORGE: *(aside)* Oh no!

DAD: *(talking on phone)* I see ... Yes, of course ... Well, that would be wonderful Goodbye.

(Hangs up phone.) The Prime Minister is a very busy man. But he is coming here on Thursday night.

Scene 2: In the street. George meets up with Lance and they are walking to the school bus stop. Mrs Crabapple is in her front garden watering her flowers.

MRS CRABAPPLE: *(waving to George and Lance)* Good morning, George. Good morning, Lance.

GEORGE: *(mumbles)* Hi.

LANCE: Hello, Mrs Crabapple.

MRS CRABAPPLE: *(Stops watering her flowers.)* What's the matter, George? You look like you lost a dollar and picked up five cents.

LANCE: The Prime Minister is coming to visit George on Thursday night.

GEORGE: *(Pointing down the road.)* There's the school bus, Lance.

LANCE: We had better hurry or we'll miss it and be late for school.

George and Lance start to run.

MRS CRABAPPLE: *(Calls after the boys.)* Why is the Prime Minister coming to see George?

GEORGE: *(Yells over his shoulder.)* Because of my vegetables.

MRS CRABAPPLE: *(Stroking her wrinkly chin, speaking aside.)* Well! A visit from the Prime Minister to honour vegetables grown by George! My friends at the Garden Club would love to hear this news!

Scene3: The Garden Club meeting. Ladies are sitting around drinking cups of tea.

MRS A: Aahhh! That's a lovely cup of tea. And these pumpkin biscuits are nice. Did you make them, Mrs B?

MRS B: Yes, I did. My parsley and mint have grown so big already. And my other vegetables will win a prize for sure at the garden show.

MRS CRABAPPLE: George's vegetables are so good that the Prime Minister is coming here on Thursday to give him an award.

MRS B: No! Really?

The MAYOR'S WIFE: My husband hasn't said anything about a visit, and he is the Mayor!

MRS CRABAPPLE: George told me himself The Prime Minister will be here Thursday night.

Scene 4: A series of Phone calls.

The Mayor's wife on the phone to her husband, the Mayor.

The MAYOR'S WIFE: The Prime Minister will be visiting town on Thursday. Young George's vegetables are the best in town. He is going to receive an award.

The MAYOR: I didn't know about that! I am going to call the State Premier's office.

The Mayor on the phone to the State Premier.

The MAYOR: The Prime Minister will be visiting our town on Thursday. Young George's vegetables are the best in the state. He is going to receive a big award.

The STATE PREMIER: The Prime Minister has not told me about this award. I will check with the Parliament.

The State Premier on the phone to the Prime Minister's Assistant.

The STATE PREMIER: The Prime Minister will be visiting our town in our state on Thursday. Young George's vegetables are the best in the country. He is going to receive a huge award.

PRIME MINISTER'S ASSISTANT: *(Looks at the Prime Minister's list of places to visit and people to see. Shakes his head because George is not on the list. Scratches his head.)* I will talk to the Prime Minister.

Scene 5: The dinner table. George and Mum and Dad having dinner.

MUM: You had better eat your vegetables, George. Don't forget who is coming on Thursday.

George closes his mouth tight and shakes his head.

DAD: Something strange happened today. The Mayor came up to me and shook my hand.

MUM: Why?

DAD: I haven't a clue. He said we must be very proud.

MUM: Of what?

DAD: I haven't a clue.

MUM: Very strange.

DAD: Yes, very strange.

George keeps his mouth shut tight.

Scene 6: The dinner table. It's Thursday. George and Mum and Dad are having dinner.

[Someone walks across stage holding a sign "Thursday".]

George has his mouth closed tight. He is still refusing to eat the vegetables on his plate.

GEORGE: *(Looking up from his plate, laughing.)* I thought the Prime Minister was coming to speak to me!

DAD: Go to your room! Right now!

George leaves the table.

GEORGE: *(Aside)* I'm so hungry! But no matter how hungry I feel, I will never eat vegetables. Never!

There is a lot of shouting and cheering outside. George looks through the window.

GEORGE: The street outside is jam-packed!

DAD: *(Looks out the window.)* There are rows of reporters and TV cameras, and they are all pointed at our house!

MUM: *(Looking out the window.)* Oh! A big black car has stopped, and a man has climbed out of the car.

GEORGE: I've seen him on TV and I know who he is! It's the Prime Minister!

Scene 7: The dining room. The Prime Minister and his wife are sitting at the table with Mum and Dad.

MUM: *(Quietly, to Dad.)* I can't believe it, the Prime Minister and his wife sitting in our living room!

PRIME MINISTER: I am here to present an award to George.

MUM: What is the award for?

PRIME MINISTER: The award is for growing the finest vegetables in the country.

Mum and Dad look at each other.

DAD: But George doesn't grow vegetables.

PRIME MINISTER: Very strange.

MUM: How did you find out about George and the vegetables?

PRIME MINISTER: My assistant told me. The Premier told him. The Mayor told the Premier. The Mayor's wife told the Mayor. And, I believe, a lady from town, Mrs Crabapple, told the Mayor's wife.

DAD: *(Looking puzzled.)* Who told Mrs Crabapple?

George walks into the room. George shakes Prime Minister's hand.

GEORGE: I did. Are you here to make me eat my vegetables?

DAD: I pretended to phone you, and I told George that you would be coming here today. I thought it might make George eat his vegetables.

PRIME MINISTER: *(to George.)* And did you?

GEORGE: No way! *(Shuts his mouth tight.)*

PRIME MINISTER: Good for you! I don't like vegetables either.

Mum places a plate of vegetables in front of George, and one in front of the Prime Minister.

MUM: Are you both going to eat your vegetables?

GEORGE: No way! *(Shuts his mouth tight.)*

PRIME MINISTER: No way! *(Shuts his mouth tight.)*

PRIME MINISTER'S WIFE: You are a very bad Prime Minister!

Mum and Dad and the Prime Minister's Wife go into the kitchen.

GEORGE: *(Taps the Prime Minister in the arm.)* Are you going to eat your vegetables?

PRIME MINISTER: *(Shakes his head.)* I am the leader of the country. I don't have to eat vegetables if I don't want to. *(Towards kitchen, shouting.)* And I don't want to!

GEORGE: *(Softly.)* Maybe vegetables **are** good for us. Maybe they **are** tasty. I think we should try the vegetables.

PRIME MINISTER: What? Never!

GEORGE: But if **you** don't eat your vegetables, no-one will.

PRIME MINISTER: What do you mean?

GEORGE: *(Pointing out the window.)* The whole country must be watching. If all the kids find out you don't eat your vegetables, they might not eat their vegetables either.

PRIME MINISTER: Well, good for them!

GEORGE: But what about the people who grow the vegetables? And the people who sell them? They won't have any jobs. And Mum and Dad said vegetables are good for you – tasty and healthy.

PRIME MINISTER: *(Strokes his chin, nods.)* So we have to eat our vegetables for the good of the country.

GEORGE: Yes, we must.

PRIME MINISTER: Very well. *(Towards the kitchen, loudly.)* We'll eat our vegetables.

Mum and Dad and the Prime Minister's wife hurry out of the kitchen and cheer.

PRIME MINISTER: George has taught me a valuable lesson today. Don't be afraid to try something new.