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REMOTE THEATRE

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The Power of Remote Theatre

The following blog highlights the great impact that remote theatre can have and was written by Nguyễn Duy Khang, Senior Lecturer at Can Tho University in Vietnam. He recently participated in a recent Remote Theatre course that Nick Bilbrough ran for Vietnamese teachers.

If you knew me in real life, you would never think that I might act in a play, especially a play originally made by young people in Gaza. This was a special metaphorical play about the current situation for children and education there. I played the role of Mr. Giraffe with a book in my hands and a will to learn regardless of the blockade imposed on Gaza. We have been learning about how to create more creative activities for Vietnamese learners in language learning. The excerpt of this play, created by Palestinian young people as entries for the Hands Up Project 2019 Remote Theatre Competition, was introduced to us at Can Tho University and some other educational institutions in Vietnam. Originally, this play was composed and performed by Sara, Afaf, Abeer, Reema and Saja from Beach Elementary Co-ed School (C) with support from their teacher Luzan Matar. You can watch our final performance in the video below.



Although everyone in Vietnam would agree that teaching in a way is a kind of performing art, please trust me when I tell you that, although we are lecturers of English, acting is not what we think we can do at all. This course in Remote Theatre has provided us with various guides and lessons, from basic knowledge about how to apply drama activities into language teaching, to the scenarios and facts of how it would help our language learners improve their competencies. One of the important values of this course was the trainer's philosophy and educational methods in different nurturing processes for learners (lecturers as trainees at this time) to experience through different steps in learning, reconstructing, dealing with limitations, working hard for new goals, and achieving some new techniques, plus gaining more confidence for everyone. The core of this course would share my common teaching philosophy of how language learners should be facilitated in their learning process for their significant learning.

For information about the rest of our team or any news related to the Remote Theatre project visit us on <https://www.remotetheatre.org/> or follow our Facebook page @remotetheatre

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In that process, the trainers go with learners in their steps, **stimulate learners' creativeness**, give them sufficient support and techniques so that they can overcome their own problems, help them be more confident, push them to learn about what they want to know, and work effectively in groups for the final performance. On the second day, when our group picked this play, I didn't even know how to choose my position, how to express my feelings, how to use my voice appropriately in different lines, and so on. I wondered if I should have had a voice and practiced with that assumption. My group thought it was ok. When the trainer visited my group, he suggested that we exaggerate the opposite perspectives and emotions in the roles of Ms. Monkey and Mr. Giraffe. We tried to figure out how we could act the contrasting features of these two voices. Three days has gone since our final performances in the Remote Theatre Project funded by the British Council and led by the online-theatre expert – Mr. Nick Bilbrough and his co-teaching fellows. I wanted to write down my experience and echo my reflections for more to come, more to understand, and more to share for a **better world**, a **better place**, and **proper opportunities** for education for everyone.

Today, I asked the trainer of the course to send me the video recording of the play so that I could send them to my students in a course of practical pronunciation for adults. I think that seeing us perform this play with the others in this project will inspire my students to practice their pronunciation of individual sounds and intonation. I would like to research whether working on plays like this would help my students improve both their soft skills and language skills. Again, you would not believe it. When acting is something I have never thought of in my life, I have to admit that education can make everything happen. Not just at School of Foreign Languages of Can Tho University and the glorious shadows of this Remote Theatre Project, but learning would always allow learners to be able to achieve what they could not imagine, education would provide us with more chances in this wide and strange world, tight and strong connections would help the boys and girls in Gaza be strong to wait till the gate will be opened, and educators could always walk hand in hand with their learners to their success.

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REMOTE THEATRE PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Progress is being made on our first intellectual output: Creating the Remote Theatre Complete Handbook for teachers. We have updated our website and social media pages with photos and videos of our progress. Many of the posts show activities from the handbook carried out by students and we have had very positive feedback to date. Please visit our blog to see some examples of remote theatre activities from the handbook and you can try them out with your students!

<https://www.remotetheatre.org/blog/category/Remote+Theatre>

WHAT'S NEXT?

In the next few months we will be continuing to create the handbook and we will be continuing to try out and recording many of the activities with students from the partners' organisations. The handbook will be completed by the end of October 2021. We will be holding a 3-day a transnational teacher training event online in January for teachers from Croatia, Italy and Bucharest.

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