

Title of lesson: Pre-Reading Strategies: Using Drama to Increase Literacy

Suggested grade/age: Middle and high school 6-12 (But can be adapted for elementary school)

Approximate time needed to complete lesson: Lesson was created with a 45-minute session in mind, but can be adapted/extended to a 50-60 minute session.

Learning objective(s) and significance of lesson:

(Why is this lesson important in the development of your students' skills or knowledge? What do you want students to learn or be able to do? What "best practice" does this lesson incorporate?)

This lesson is important in developing my students' skills because of the following reasons:

1. Drama has been shown to increase students grades in other subject areas
2. Drama helps increases student confidence
3. Drama helps students practice oral communication and other speaking skills
4. Drama covers all of the multiple intelligences in some form or another

The lesson is important in developing student knowledge and deceptively getting students to use Shakespeare's language and to gain fluency *before* delving into iambic pentameter, etc. I want students to not only grasp Shakespeare's language, but to use their voice outside of the classroom to speak out.

Brief summary/outline of lesson:

(What steps do you take to implement this lesson in your classroom? Where is this lesson located in the school year or unit—beginning, middle, end? Does this lesson scaffold or build to a culminating assessment or demonstration of learning?)

This lesson is most often used at the beginning of a drama unit (and can be adapted for pre-reading of a novel or other prose piece) In this case, it is to try and help students feel more comfortable with Shakespeare's language and to start them using it as soon as possible. Giving a student one line allows them to understand the language and master it before using it in an active way, just as actors do on the stage.

This lesson then leads into a longer unit of reading a play by Shakespeare, or other playwright, and having students form acting companies that create their own promptbooks (a collection of director's notes, costume and set designs, character and scene analyses, and other materials that relate to the students' production). The summative activity of the unit is then a graded performance and a final grade on their promptbook.

Related Resources:

(What technology, articles, books, or supplies do you recommend?)

This can work with many different plays as well as novels by substituting dialogue or famous quotations instead of characters' lines.

Tossing Lines Activities (Shakespeare)

[Stratford Festival](#)

[Theatre Educational Guides \(a selection\)](#)

[Park Square Theatre Educational Guides](#)

[Guthrie Theater Play Guides](#)

[Arena Stage Study Guides \(Washington, DC\)](#)

Possible extensions or adaptations for different purposes/student needs:

For students with visual or auditory considerations, the activity can be adapted to pair students up so they are working in teams. The teacher can also assist students, moving about the space, so no one student feels that they are being singled out.

For students with mobility considerations, this activity can be used with different types of objects for students to toss (a beach ball vs. a baseball) or students do not even toss a ball, but simply make eye contact and toss and catch an invisible ball.

For additional information, contact: Alexandra Howes ahowes@twincitiesacademy.org