

Acting Elective; Readers Theatre

Explore acting elements as well as character, setting and main idea through Readers Theatre.

***Readers theatre is a way of performing books that have been turned into plays. This specific theatre performance is performed with actors using their scripts and standing while they perform. This focuses on vocal elements as well as creating scripts from books.

Students start the elective learning the three actors' tools, body, voice and imagination. Through games and activities students learned how to act out stories.

After learning the actors' tools students worked on understanding character, setting and dialogue. After exploring these elements with games and activities students were ready to choose their book. I gave students a check-list of the elements we talked about that would make a good readers theatre book. I broke the class into 5 groups. After going over the check-list to ensure everyone understood the groups went to the media center and chose their books.

The books chosen were:

Anansi and the Talking Melon

Three Little Pigs

What Are Your Words

Pizza and Taco

Frederick

After each group chose a book we went back to the classroom and read each book. After reading the 5 books the class voted on a book to cut from the list. The class voted on Three Little Pigs.

After choosing our 4 books for our performance I split the students into 4 groups to read the book and create a book poster that focused on the characters, settings and main idea of the book.

2.A.1.1 Distinguish the setting, characters, sequence of events, main idea, problem, and solution for a variety of stories.

3.A.1.1 Differentiate specific character traits in texts or scripts.

After each group did their poster I had the groups come to me and write their script with me. We chose which lines in the book were important so the play kept the integrity of the book.

2.A.1.2 Analyze the relationships between events, characters, and settings.

2.A.1.1 Distinguish the setting, characters, sequence of events, main idea, problem, and solution for a variety of stories.

2.C.1.3 Use dialogue to enhance the clarity of stories.

3.C.1.3 Understand how to transform stories into written dialogue.

After finishing the scripts I asked the class if they would like to talk a lot or a little in the performance. Students who said they wanted to talk a lot got placed in roles where they would talk a lot.

We then rehearsed the plays and worked on the element of voice to sound like the characters and ensure the audience can hear the actors.

2.C.1.2 Use vocal variety and animation to create distinct voices for characters.

3.C.1.2 Apply appropriate volume and variation in pitch, rate, and tone to express character.

3.CU.2.2 Understand the role of the actor in relation to performance responsibilities, such as memorization, blocking, and characterization.

The performance was then performed at the Q2 afterschool performance.

While I never went into detail about what pronouns meant or why each character had different pronouns, I do believe it is and always has been the job of theatre and drama to create a safe and inclusive space in the world. The book in question was an amazing way to bring that inclusion into our classroom. As a nonbinary/trans teacher the below standards aligned perfectly with the use of this book. This text allowed students to explore how they can artistically express the cultures around them, including the LGBTQ+ community.

2.CU.1.1 Exemplify theatrical works representing the heritage, customs, and traditions of various cultures.

3.CU.1.1 Exemplify how theatre arts are used by various groups for artistic expression within the local community