

## Arts Discipline Examples

### DRAMA

#### CONTEXT

In a long-term partnership with an elementary school, a teaching artist plans to conduct residencies with three different grade levels, along with two, 90-minute PD experiences with faculty. During a planning meeting, the principal and teachers suggest that the program builds on their school goal of helping students become more confident communicators, from working effectively with partners and peers, to regularly answering questions with a clearly stated reason and purpose. As a rural school with a large English Language Learner population, they feel these are two of the students' greatest challenges. The principal and teachers express the hope that by having the classroom teachers develop their own skills of implementing drama strategies in the classroom, they can both engage the students in collaborative activities, and inspire students to actively participate in classroom discussions. The teaching artist designs the residency and PD experiences to work in tandem with each other. The teachers will see the strategies applied in a classroom setting as they learn the purpose and about how to facilitate them in the PD experiences.

#### ESTABLISHING PURPOSE

As part of the introduction to a 3-day drama/language arts integrated PD course, the teaching artist presents the following quotes to demonstrate three points: a) research supports the PD strategies and approach; b) teachers use drama strategies to help reach struggling students; and c) students are deeply engaged when learning through drama strategies.

##### Research

Researchers Rose, Parks, Androes and McMahon (2000) compared student outcomes from a drama-based reading program to those of a traditional reading program. Students in the drama-based reading program (the experimental group) participated in 10-weeks of theory-driven, research-based reading comprehension instruction that used drama techniques emphasizing imagery, elaboration, and story element segmentation. Students in the traditional reading program (the control group) received a traditional text-based reading curriculum. Results showed a significant improvement in reading comprehension skills for the drama-instruction group in comparison with the control group. These findings provide evidence for a causal link between drama-based instruction and improved reading comprehension, and suggest that drama-based reading instruction may be more effective than traditional approaches in improving students' reading skills.

##### Teacher Quote

*I have struggled getting students to interpret, explain their understanding, message of stories. By learning to use their imagination through drama, my students were engaged*



**Body** – How we use the body to express characters, actions, feelings, reactions and desires

**Ensemble** – How we interact successfully with others towards common goals

**Story** – How we create, structure and deliver what we desire to express

## EXPERIENCE

This 3-hour PD workshop for elementary level teachers is designed to have them participate in a full lesson, using various Snapshot strategies to explore a complete picture book text. The lesson example is focused on lower elementary students. Using the book “Rockabye Crocodile” by Jose Aruego, the teaching artist first guides classroom teachers to create individual Snapshots based on key vocabulary, such as kindhearted, selfish, sneak, plunge, seize, and stumble. After reading the first part of the story, classroom teachers create Sculpted Snapshots of the main characters in the story working with their partners. The group then reads the next part of the story and, again working in pairs, creates Pair Snapshots with their partners that express key moments of interaction between the characters. The teaching artist guides partners to reflect on and revise their Snapshots. The partners then take turns sharing their art work with the rest of the group, to engage with an O.D.I. +1 process (Observe, Describe, Interpret plus Reflect/Respond/Wonder; See Resources) of responding to each other’s work. After reading the next part of the story, pairs or trios of classroom teachers engage in the Add-on Snapshot strategy to express their prediction for the end of the story. As they create, the partners discuss possibilities in order to explore more than one option. Partners then share their art work with the group, describing their prediction for the story’s end. The group reads the rest of the story.

## FACILITATION

In a 3-hour PD experience, the classroom teachers prepare to facilitate the strategy of pantomime after having experienced it. The teachers and teaching artist reflect on the facilitation steps demonstrated by the teaching artist, then the teaching artist offers classroom teachers a selection of vocabulary words or text to use as the focus of their facilitation practice. The teachers plan out their facilitation steps using one of the words or selections and then teachers gather in groups of 4 or 5 and take turns facilitating their group members through the strategy. Next, the teaching artist guides the teachers to reflect on their experience; which steps were most challenging, where they felt most comfortable, what they might do differently, any questions they have for clarifying the facilitation and what they noticed about each other’s choices.

## REFLECTION

Over the course of a three hour PD experience, the teaching artist engages the classroom teachers in several 10-minute reflection sessions using think-pair-share:

- What will they need to consider and/or establish before beginning?

- After experiencing a drama strategy: What did you notice about yourself as a learner while participating? What did you notice about the way I facilitated you in the strategy?
- After experiencing several drama strategies/activities: What skills are being developed in students through these strategies? Why do you think students might be engaged by this approach?
- After experiencing a full drama lesson: How might you adapt this process for your students? Where do you see the strongest connections with Depth of Knowledge levels? Which standards are being most directly addressed?

## ASSESSMENT

As part of a multi-session PD course, participating classroom teachers explore literature through still image strategies (Snapshot, Tableau) and then practice facilitating the strategies. On the second day of the course, the classroom teachers help develop a rubric by describing, in writing, what students look like and how they behave when creating still images. Co-constructing the rubric helps classroom teachers clearly visualize, in detail, how to guide quality with the art form.

## PLANNING

During a one-hour in-service PD experience, classroom teachers discuss and plan for how they might apply what they learned during the workshop session to their own curricular needs. The strategy brainstorm template offers teachers a structure for thinking through the facilitation process in a manner similar to how a teaching artist works. The template encourages teachers to consider not only what material they will use to integrate a drama strategy, but also how they will guide students to construct and demonstrate understanding by addressing evolving objectives in both the art and the integrated subject.

## EVALUATION

At the conclusion of a three hour PD experience, a short time is set aside for classroom teachers to offer brief answers to the following questions, to help the teaching artist understand the immediate impact of the experience on the participating teachers. They respond within the whole group setting.

- *Which drama strategy will you attempt first? Which strategy might you not use (and why)?*
- *Which parts of the workshop (e.g. experience, facilitation, assessment discussion) were most helpful in this workshop?*
- *What is something that you would have liked more of?*
- *What are you most concerned about as you consider implementing the strategy?*

At the end of the workshop, teachers fill out a Post-Workshop Questionnaire to provide measurable ratings on specific aspects of the workshop experience.