



Americans for the Arts Annual Convention

Session Title:

Motivating the English Language Learner through Drama

Presenter

Since 1981 **Lenore Blank Kelner** has directed her own educational theater company, InterAct Story Theatre. She works with students and teachers across the country. She frequently presents at the John F. Kennedy Center in Washington, DC and for the Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning for the Arts. She frequently serves as a consultant for the Maryland State Department of Education. She has written three books on drama in the classroom. Her book, *The Creative Classroom* published by Heinemann is in its 13th printing. Her newest book, *A Dramatic Approach to Reading Comprehension* was published by Heinemann in July, 2006. Lenore was awarded the AATE Creative Drama Award for 2004.

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GOALS FOR THIS SESSION

This session addresses the following broad content standards:

- ELL students are expected to simultaneously learn to speak, read and write their new language,
- ELL students are often required to attain a certain level of language proficiency to be considered fluent speakers (pass an exit exam),
- Several states across the nation have established standards (K-12) in theatre which all students including ELL students are expected to achieve.

At the end of this session participants should be able to:

- Use the acting tools (imagination/mind, voice, body) and basic acting skills (cooperation, concentration) in order to create characters in a story,
- Apply one or more of the drama/theatre techniques presented in the session in their classrooms in order to promote students' receptive and expressive language, as well as reading motivation and comprehension.

At the end of this workshop participant will understand that:

- Speaking and learning a new language can be an emotional experience,
- Motivation and risk-taking are key elements in learning anything new;
- Learning activities involving drama/theatre strategies engage and motivate students to speak, read, write and comprehend.

Key Story Dramatization Steps

Teacher Planning

Step 1: Select an appropriate text.

- Identify the portion(s) of the text to dramatize.

Step 2: Determine the key drama and reading comprehension objectives.

Step 3: Choose a delivery approach for the story.

- Deliver the text aloud/Determine Listening Tasks.
- Deliver the text silently.

Step 4: Determine a procedure for sequencing.

Step 5: Organize the dramatization.

- Identify a role for every student. Create a Cast List.
- Define the Acting Area and create a blocking plan.
- Identify and plan how to dramatize challenging moments.
- Plan the narration.

Student Preparation

Step 6: Identify Drama and Reading Comprehension Objectives.

- Conduct pertinent warm-ups for all the acting tools and skills.

Step 7: Familiarize students with the text.

- Deliver the scene or story using Listening Tasks.
- Sequence the plot.

Step 8: Describe the Story Dramatization guidelines.

- Define the Acting Area.
- Clarify roles.
- Review/refresh the acting tools and skills with a warm up.
- Rehearse challenging moments in the story.
- Explain the blocking.

Conducting the Story Dramatization

Step 9: Enact the scene or story.

- Transition from reality to fantasy.
- Narrate the action using descriptive cues.
- Remain in the fiction.
- Transition from fantasy to reality

Reflecting on the Story Dramatization

Step 10: Assess the Students.

- Reflective Discussions
- Written Assessments
- Assessment Checklists

(revised and reprinted with permission from *A Dramatic Approach to Reading Comprehension*, Lenore Blank Kelner, Rosalind M. Flynn, Heinemann, 2006)



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STAFF DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP FEEDBACK SHEET

Name _____ Date _____

School (if applicable) _____ Street Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____ Email address _____

How clear and understandable was the workshop content?

- 1 extremely clear and understandable
- 2 clear and understandable
- 3 not at all clear and understandable

Comments: _____

How confident are you that you've learned the workshop content well enough to use some of the techniques and skills?

- 1 extremely confident
- 2 confident
- 3 somewhat confident
- 4 not at all confident

Comments: _____

How would you rate this workshop in comparison with other workshops you have taken?

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1 much better | 4 worse |
| 2 better | 5 much worse |
| 3 about the same | 6 not applicable |

Comments: _____

How will you use the strategies you learned in the workshop (use space below)?

Please use the reverse side of this form for additional comments.

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