

Puppet Dreams

An Ezra Jack Keats Grant Project

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Abstract

The history of puppetry stretches from 1000 B.C and early Indian epics to Broadway's Lion King. The purpose of Puppet Dreams was to encourage and increase use of oral language and expand literacy skills and strategies of third grade English language (ELL) students. This workshop will discuss the structure of a program from idea, to grant award to final evaluation. Three classes learned about puppetry as they wrote and produced mini plays based on the Ezra Jack Keats "Dreams". Collaborative groups practiced reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. Students used a wiki to comment on activities and collaboratively develop their plays. High School student volunteers assisted with several activities including refurbishing an old puppet frame theater. Students developed a rubric for presentations and evaluated each team play.

Introduction

Located near the Pacific Ocean, R L Stevenson serves 479 K-5 students. Ethnic makeup of Stevenson includes 63.8 % Chinese, 3% other Asian, 11.8% Other non white, 2.4% Latino, 3.3% African American, 8.3% Other white .2% American Indian and 7.2 declined to state. 52% of students are eligible for free or reduced lunch, 11.8% are designated Special Education, 7% are designated GATE and 40% of the students are English Language Learners (ELL-LEP/NEP)

Our Mission: to guide the development of a well-rounded human being who has the ability, skills and attitude to contribute positively to self, family, community and society; to prepare the child for responsible life in a free society with the understanding of the need for peace, tolerance, equality and friendship among all people and the desire to leave the world better than they found it.

We have identified improving student writing as a school wide goal in our site plan. ELL and special education students also need support in all areas of literacy: reading, writing, listening and speaking. With this goal in mind, I applied for the Ezra Jack Keats Grant. I had participated in a shadow puppet workshop at UC Berkeley ORAIS (citation). This art form provided an ideal format for ELL student learning AND enjoyment. Program objectives are Literacy and Technology: 1. Puppets: Literacy treasures for Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking

2. Student Web 2.0 explorations: polls, comments, writing plays, rubrics in collaborative groups

Overview

I wrote a rough draft of the grant and met with third grade teachers to finalize ideas.

1. Students will learn about theater and puppetry as they write and produce mini plays based on the Ezra Jack Keats title "Dreams".

2. Students will work with small groups to write and act out mini plays, practicing reading, writing, listening and speaking skills.
3. Lincoln High School Student volunteers will assist with several activities as well as refurbish an old puppet frame.
4. Library display of student activities.

Structure of Program

Third grade students will participate in Puppet Dreams during 3-5 class visits to the library. The librarian will plan these collaborative lessons with third grade teachers supporting our literacy curriculum.

First class: Read *Dreams* by Ezra Jack Keats. Students work in groups of four to discuss favorite parts of the story and then share with the class.

Lincoln High School student volunteers will refurbish and paint a puppet frame that the librarian rescued from discard. They will refinish, paint and use collage to depict seasonal scenes from various Keats titles.

Second class: Students in small groups will brainstorm and write a mini play. They will use wiki to write about puppets, develop play, reflect on process. They will create puppets and practice their plays. The whole class will develop a “puppet play” rubric to evaluate presentations. Lincoln High School student volunteers will assist groups.

Third class: Students will present plays and use rubric to evaluate each group. Classes will contribute positive comments and constructive ideas to improve each play. Lincoln High School student volunteers will assist groups and film activities. They will help 3rd grade students create a short “how to make puppets” poster to use with younger students

Library display: Puppets from 70 students will be displayed in the library.

Extending the project: Later in the year third grade students will be puppet “mentors” and present puppet shows to primary classes. They will also teach primary students how to make paper puppets.

Total Cost \$500.00 * *\$500 is the maximum award

Actual Timeline: This project took several more class periods. Third grade students learned how to write on a wiki, including unique individual user name/password.

*February 3-4 Students examine cover and make predictions for *Dreams* by Ezra Jack Keats. Read aloud book to students. Each table (4 students) discusses favorite part of book. Each student writes about favorite part on wiki. Prompts for wiki- What was your favorite part of *Dreams* by Ezra Jack Keats? Do you have a favorite quote or phrase? Do you have a favorite illustration?*

Each student complete the puppet poll on wiki. (Table 1)

Lincoln students plan for stage painting.

February 10-11 Whole class develop rubric for puppet plays on wiki. Students discuss and draft on chart with teacher in classroom. (Table 2)

Each table brainstorm ideas for their play. Use graphic organizer on wiki for ideas. (Table 3)

Draft puppet play and if time, begin sock puppets. Lincoln students work on stage.

February 24-25

Finish puppets and plays. (Table 4)

Each group has "dress rehearsal" at their group table. Comment about play and puppet on wiki.

Student interviews with Justin Reich, Digital Collaborative Learning Communities Project, Doctoral Candidate, Harvard Graduate School of Education. a research study funded by the Hewlett Foundation to learn more about the use of Web 2.0 tools in K-12 learning environments. I sent home permission slips in English and Chinese. Justin observed classes using Web 2.0 and then spoke with several students.

Lincoln students finish stage.

March 3-4

Performance of puppet plays. Audience use rubric for plays.

Week of March 22-26

Display of puppets in library for Parent Conference Week Third grade students present play to primary classes and help students make paper puppets.

I have presented workshops on grant writing. After completion of Puppet Dreams grant program I developed an interactive workshop to show the progression from grant idea to student learning.

Workshop Agenda

Teacher Librarian Poll (Table 5)

Read and discuss Puppet Dreams

Team brainstorm: decide on genre/themes

Writing puppet plays: character, script, rubric

Whole group create two puppets: folded paper & pencil (stick)

Small group select genre, theme and draft 5 sentence script: beginning challenge; middle action; end solution. (Table 3)

Small groups share puppet play using rubric (Table 2)

Reflection: Star Mind Map

Conclusion

Students enjoyed this project. Their plays were often silly. Little sock puppets had unusual features! Many of the students had "played" with puppets but had not created plays or performed with puppets. Students expanded their language arts skills as they created a character and setting. Discipline and practice in small groups was challenging and ultimately rewarding. ELL students developed new

expertise in projecting their voices and interacting with others during a performance. Using Web 2.0 technology to comment on various activities was also a new experience. Students gained confidence and self esteem as they read comments made by classmates.

Three key learnings:

- Children and puppets are a magical combination.
- Everything always takes way more time, more structure for writing and more reflection.
- Should puppet creation come first? Or should students write plays then make puppets?

References

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Ezra Jack Keats Foundation. (2011). Grants Page. http://www.ezra-jack-keats.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=103&Itemid=65

Goldberg, Merryl.(2004). Poets and Puppets: Learning English. Using poetry and puppets in ELL classroom. <http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/how-to/supporting-individual-needs/ell-poetry-and-puppets.aspx#Puppetry%20and%20Dramatics>

Legends & Lore. Puppet Resource Center Learn how to make a sack or sock puppet and how to make a puppet show!

<http://www.legend sandlore.com/puppet-resource.html>

Biographical Note

Statement of Originality

This statement certifies that the paper above is based upon original research undertaken by the author and that the paper was conceived and written by the author(s) alone and has not been published elsewhere.

All information and ideas from others is referenced. KEH

Table 1 Student Poll

What puppet play would you like to write?

Mystery with a surprise ending

Adventure with lots of action

Animal story with humor

Folk tale with magic

Story from another country or another time

Story about students at our school

Story about children in our city

Table 2 Rubric **Story Telling: Puppet Show B-1 B-4 B-5 Table_____**

CATEGORY	Excellent = 4	Good = 3	Satisfactory = 2	Needs Improvement =1
Playwriting	Play was creative & really held the audience's interest.	Play was creative & usually held the audience's interest.	Play had some creative elements, but often did not hold the audience's interest.	Play needed more creative elements.
Accuracy of Story	All important parts of story were included.	Almost all important parts of story were included.	Quite a few important parts of story were included.	Much of the story was left out.
Puppet Construction	Puppets were original, creative & well made. No pieces fell off during the performance.	Puppets were well made. No pieces fell off during the performance.	Puppets fairly well made. No pieces fell off during the performance.	Puppets were not well made. Pieces fell off during the performance.
Puppet Manipulation	Puppeteers always held puppets so audience could see them.	Puppeteers usually held puppets so audience could see them.	Puppeteers sometimes held puppets so audience could see them.	Puppeteers rarely held puppets so audience could see them.
Voice Projection	Voices of puppeteers were always loud enough.	Voices of puppeteers were usually loud enough.	Voices of puppeteers were sometimes loud enough.	Voices of puppeteers were rarely loud enough..

Expression	Puppeteers' voices showed a lot of expression and emotion.	Puppeteers' voices showed some expression and emotion.	Puppeteers' voices showed a little expression and emotion.	Puppeteers' voices were monotone and not expressive.
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Table 3 Puppet Play Template

Know your audience

Know the characters.

Pick a main character.

Exaggerate characters

Develop a plot. What is play about, where it is happening and what is challenge.

Add humor. Have fun and exaggerate everything. Use lots of action.

Practice with your puppets.

Keep props simple

Add music

Practice, Practice, Practice

Table 4 Puppet Play Script

Genre (choose one): mystery, adventure, folktale, another country or time, our school, our city

Who is the Audience:

Title:

Author(s):

Setting:

Characters:

Beginning (Challenge, Problem):

Plot What is Action of Character 1?

What is reaction of (Character 2-4)? Funny/silly/sad/wild

Middle (Action, Dialogue):

What is reaction of (Character 1)?

What is reaction of (Character 2-4)?

What is action of (Character 1)?

End (Conclusion/Solution):

Add your character and check boxes as you complete your script writing.

Student Author	Character	Beginning	Middle	End

Table 5 Poll Puppet Dreams Librarian and Teacher Poll

Do you read aloud to library classes?

Do students perform “Readers Theater” in the library?

Do students work on writing projects in the library: book talks, book reviews?

Do students create books and participate in bookmaking in the library?

Does your library have commercial puppets for students to use (with books or favorite stories and poems)?

Do students make simple puppets in the library (bag, pop-up, finger)?

Do students write scripts and produce plays in the library?

Other:

Editorial Style

- Editorial changes may be made to manuscripts.
- The editorial style conforms closely to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, usually referred to as APA. A particular modification of APA accepted is the use of first names of authors (rather than initials only). For more details, please consult the 6th edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, published in 2009, or online APA style guides such as those found at:
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>
<http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/DocAPA.html>

