

Dramatic Characters Come Alive Through Storytelling

Essential Question...

What is the process for developing a dramatic character?

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Student created mask

Confidence, imagination, and belief can improve my ability to perform in a role.

Self-assessment and reflection helps me improve.

Masks, actions, and voice help create and define a character.

Understanding a character develops from doing drama exercises.

Students will use dramatic techniques, such as masks, voice, and actions, to help develop an animal character. These characters will be used in to perform a skit based on an African folk tale.

Living Sky School Division #202



**Grade 7
Arts Education**

**Strand
Drama**

**Outcome
CP7.4**

Outcome:

CP7.4 Investigate how dramatic character develops from role.

Indicators:

Demonstrate confidence and imagination when working in various roles.

Investigate when in role how character may be expressed through actions.

Revise work based upon reflection and critical analysis of the role and character.



The students performed their skits in front of a grade one/two class.

Students Will Know:

Students will know that revision and reflection are strategies to help themselves improve how they express the story.

Students will know that cooperation is essential in creating collaborative drama.

Students will know the various roles masks have in African cultures and ways they are used in storytelling.

Students will understand that confidence, imagination, voice, and action help to create a believable character.

Students Will Do:

Students will use actions, voice, and a mask to help develop their animal character.

Students will be able to identify these characteristics (actions and voice) in other dramatic situations.

Students will demonstrate confidence while acting by remaining in character and by projecting their voice.

Students will reflect upon their acting and use these reflections to revise and edit prior to their final performance.

Students will be able to work cooperatively in groups in order to perform a skit based on an African folk tale.

Questions for Deeper Understanding:

How does wearing a mask affect my performance?

How do I make my acting believable?

How do I become a character?

How do I project and enhance my voice to suit my character?

How do I demonstrate confidence and imagination?

How do I use movement and actions to help develop my character?

Formative Assessment:

Pre-Assessment

- Students self assess their confidence (pre & post) and ability to use imagination.

Self-Assessment

- Students will have an opportunity to reflect on their performance before the end performance. This reflection will lead to student created goals for improvement.

Summative Assessment:

Performance Task

- Perform a skit based on an African folk tale. Develop a strong character using dramatic techniques.
- Teacher assessment: rubric

Other Evidence

- Students' self-assessments and reflections

Learning Plan

Lesson One: What Makes a Character Believable?

Timeframe: Approximately one-two hours

- **Motivator:** Discuss the importance of masks and folk tales in African cultures.

- **Small Groups:** In student or teacher chosen groups, the students will find an African folk tale on the internet. If the students are unable to find one that is already in script form, they will have to rewrite or adapt the tale into a script. Be sure to stress that they're not to include a narrator.

See resource list for possible websites to find African folk tales.

- Once the tale has been chosen, the students will decide who will play which character.

You may wish to give the students an opportunity to change their character to suit a character they wish to create a mask for (i.e., change a human character to a lion). See resource list for suggestions on how to create masks.

- **Individual:** Provide students with time to research their character (how it moves (action), noises it makes (voice), etc.). Show examples of films where people play an animal (might just be a voice for an animation). The students will note the qualities that made this character believable. Have them also look for how certain characters talk and how this relates to their personality (i.e., how does the villain's voice reflect his or her personality?).
- **Whole Group:** Discuss the students' responses to the research activity. Record their responses on chart paper for future reference.

Lesson Two: Practice Makes Perfect

Timeframe: Approximately 6-8 hours

- **Motivator:** Discuss and demonstrate the difference between speaking from the throat versus the diaphragm.
- **Whole Group:** Demonstrate and have the students practice projecting their voice. Have them imagine that their voice comes from their chests rather than their throats. Have the students practice projecting by reciting phrases, such as tongue twisters, or by reciting words by having your voice match their meaning (for example, you may say the word cold).
- **Small Groups:** The students will practice their folk tales and pay particular attention to how they are using actions to demonstrate animal characteristics.
- When the students feel like they have a good grasp on their characters and lines, they will record a practice performance to be reviewed by them later for self-reflection.
- **Reflect:** Using the documented practice, the students will self-evaluate their performance and set goals for improvement using the self-assessment handout. Collect the handouts for their final evaluation.
- **Revise:** The groups will then continue to practice their folk tales, focusing on improving it based on evidence they found in their trial-run. The students will receive feedback from their teacher and group members regarding how they're improving.
- **Show and Share:** The students will then perform for an audience (class members, younger grades, etc.). Their performance will be recorded for later self-assessment.
- **Reflect:** The students will then watch their performance and self-assess their own performance using the self-reflection handout.
 - Assess the students' work using the rubric.

Remind students that their actions need to be exaggerated.

The students may need to create props or scenery.

Possible Assessment: *Student Self-Assessment* handout.

Possible Assessment : *Drama Rubric: African Folk Tales.*

Assessment

Student Self-Assessment (Practice Performance) **Name:** _____

1. Did I demonstrate confidence and imagination when acting and working in my group? Explain. _____

2. How did my actions reflect the character I was playing? _____

3. How did my voice reflect the character I was playing? _____

4. Based on my comments above, two areas that I did well were... _____

5. Based on my comments above, two areas that need improvement prior to the final performance are... _____

6. How am I going to improve my performance? _____

Student Self-Assessment (Final Performance)

Name: _____

1. Was I able to improve my performance based on my comments before? Explain.

2. Overall, I was _____ with my performance because ...

3. How did I contribute to the group? _____

Category	Mastery	Refining	Developing	Experimenting
Confidence and Imagination	Consistently demonstrates confidence and imagination. Student is willing to take risks.	Often demonstrates confidence and imagination.	Sometimes demonstrates confidence and imagination.	Rarely or never demonstrates confidence and imagination.
Character Expression	Character is fully developed. Student demonstrates expressive techniques (voice and action) when in character.	Character is adequately developed. Student demonstrates an attempt at expressive techniques (voice and action) when in character.	Character is somewhat developed but expressive techniques (voice and action) when in character are lacking in major areas.	Little or no regard for expressive techniques (voice and action) when in character.
Self-Reflection and Revision	Always uses reflective thinking when self-assessing own work. Uses own reflections to improve performance.	Often uses reflective thinking when self-assessing own work. Often uses own reflections to improve performance.	Sometimes uses reflective thinking when self-assessing own work. Sometimes uses own reflections to improve performance.	Rarely or never uses reflective thinking when self-assessing own work. Rarely or never uses own reflections to improve performance.
Group Work	Self-motivated and works independently at an advanced level. Demonstrates consistent leadership ability and uses mediation skills in group creative processes.	Needs some direction but can work independently. Contributes to group process and works cooperatively with others on most occasions.	Rarely works independently. Rarely contributes to the group.	Never works independently; needs constant support and guidance. Disrupts or does not contribute to group process.
Final Product	Planning and preparation is thorough and the skit is well developed and presented.	Planning and preparation is evident and the skit is completed with some need of refinement.	Planning and preparation is limited and the skit is adequate but in need of considerable revision.	Little or no planning and preparation and the skit is incomplete.

Resources

African Folk Tales

The students found the following websites helpful. Each of the websites contains African folk tales which the students can use or adapt to develop their skits.

African Folk Tales collected by Phillip Martin

<http://www.phillipmartin.info/liberia/homepage.htm>

Theatre Words

<http://www.theaterwords.com/>

African Masks

The following website may be useful for researching the importance of masks and animals in African cultures.

Artful Animals

<http://africa.si.edu/exhibits/animals/animals.html>

African Masks

<http://www.artfactory.com/africanmasks/index.htm>

Mask Making

The following is a link to a wiki which demonstrates the process we used to create our masks, as well as some finished masks.

<http://ficko.wikispaces.com/Mask+Making+How-To>