

Arts Assessment For Learning

THEATER — 1ST AND 2ND GRADES

REFLECTION: STORYTELLING

Without judgment, describe what you did. Just the facts:

The children worked for several months learning to tell a variety of short folktales. Skills at using vocal and physical expression were taught, as well as techniques for remembering stories in appropriate sequence and in detail. Criteria for effective storytelling were made clear in discussion, and through the use of checklists and rubrics. The children were taught a method for giving peer to peer feedback in an appropriate manner. Throughout this process the children received teacher and peer feedback when sharing their stories. Each time feedback was given the children had a chance to revise their work.

For our final performance task the children were allowed to choose a story they wanted to share with another class. They were given time to rehearse their stories working in small groups. Some children told solo, others acted out their stories “story theater” style working in small ensembles. All the children worked in small groups providing feedback to each other using checklists. A rehearsal late in the process was video recorded. The children viewed the video of their work and set a goal for improvement. The goals were selected from a checklist. The children then had another chance to rehearse and improve their work. The work was video recorded a second time, so that the children could see their own improvement. At long last they shared their stories with another class of younger children.

What went well?

Everything! The project went remarkably smoothly in the target class. The children were accurate in their peer and self-assessments. At times when self-assessing they would focus on a minor issue needing improvement when a larger issue went unnoticed. In these cases I would suggest an additional goal for them. Video recording the rehearsals proved a powerful tool for helping the students improve. Over time we learned to video record the children twice. Being able to see their own improvement on video made a strong impact on the children.

What was so-so?

- The ability of the students to focus when they are acting as audience members is sometimes a challenge.

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- The students tend to get overly excited when rehearsing, so naturally the volume in the room is sometimes an issue.

What was the most challenging part of trying this?

I wonder sometimes if the students are truly invested in the process or are only doing it because I have asked them to. Collecting data; I have a lot of evidence but I am not quite sure how to pull it all together to show their progress.

What was the impact of this strategy on student learning? (Specific examples)

In almost every case the students showed improvement in their performance work. An additional benefit for the students was developing their ability to assess work and articulate what made work good and what areas needed improvement. At times students who were not strong as performers had keen insight into what made quality work. Possibly there are incipient directors?

What questions were raised for you as you implemented the assessment practice?

How can I help the students to make their feedback more specific?

What new insights or understandings are forming as a result of this experience? (share with group)

I am really excited about the culture that has grown in my classroom. The students are using the assessment tools without a constant reminder, and doing so with insight.

How do the results of your action plan inform your inquiry question?

It has given me evidence that peer and self-assessment is helping my students grow as actors.

Documentation to bring (student work, photos, writing, teacher journal, etc):

Rehearsal Sheets

Criteria/rubrics

Video