

Engaging ELs in Theatre

Make learning visible



- Establish content and connected language targets to support students in describing a variety of theatre roles, comparing examples of theatrical literature, explaining their personal responses towards theatrical works, evaluating theatrical performances, etc.
- Draw attention to patterns and relationships in dramatic performances
- Refer to student-generated word walls to support language development and understanding of elements of theatre production and management
- Complement word walls and anchor charts with visuals, e.g., on a poster that lists elements of drama with visual cues for memory and language connection such as speech bubbles for dialogue, or different images of settings to connect with scenes

Support the language of theatre

- Provide multiple opportunities for students to communicate about their and peers' theatre performances and products
- Explicitly teach the language of theatre arts beyond a focus on vocabulary to support conceptual understanding
- Provide sentence starters to support *Theatre Arts Standards of Learning* (SOL) and communication of ideas and reactions:
 - Evaluate works by self and others:
My/Your/the performance can be improved by _____.
When acting, I/you/the actor can improve technique by _____.
 - Classify theatrical performances or works in a variety of ways:
I can tell this play was written by _____ because it _____.
_____ (title of work) is/uses _____ (style, form, means).
 - Compare and contrast aspects of musical works:
These two theatre performances are (similar/different) because _____.
The element that makes this theatrical performance (unique/different) is _____.
 - Articulate personal response to theatre:
This theatrical performance made me feel _____ because _____.
I can relate to (character) because _____.
 - Understand historical and cultural influences:
_____ was a popular form in theatre performances during (time period) because _____.
_____ performance/playwright may have been impacted/influenced by _____.
 - Inquire about theatre:
I wonder why the playwright chose _____?
What technical tool may help to _____ in the best way?



Connect learning to students' backgrounds and skills



- Make connections between theatre as a mode of expression and students' lives
- Highlight contributions and innovations from a variety of cultures
- Facilitate opportunities for responses and design choices to be explained in student's home language
- Model respectful analysis of a variety of perspectives

Use cooperative learning structures and strategies

- Structure opportunities for students to collaborate and communicate ideas when evaluating theatrical works
- Use flexible and fluid grouping of students
- Ask students to "Notice" and "Wonder/Inquire" about theatrical performances and products together
- Teach "talk moves" so students can engage in academic conversations about theatre, e.g., I would like to build on your idea. I have a different idea to share. Can you please clarify what you just said?



Reduce cognitive load and allow processing time

- Break texts and scripts into smaller sections and use bullet points versus complex paragraphs
- Read lines aloud for students to repeat and practice. Model appropriate inflection and intonation for performance lines.
- Provide visuals and videos to complement written texts
- Show and explain model and sample products that meet product or performance expectations
- Provide adequate thinking and processing time, and flexible time frames for completing tasks



High expectations, asset-based thinking, and a growth mindset are key to student success!

Virginia Department of Education 2020

