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Sincerely,
Karen Haag

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Act It Out!

“Drama is a potent device for helping students to bring their background experiences, schema knowledge, and questions to bear on not only the reading of text, but for visualizing and expressing knowledge.”

--Wilhelm and Edmiston, *Imagining to Learn*

ENGAGE

Ask students if they can guess what word goes at the end of this sentence: “*To help me read, I can _____.*” (act out stories)

EXPLAIN LEARNING TARGET

To help me read, I can act out stories.

EXPLORE

1. T tells students that they will experiment with acting out stories to see if it helps with understanding.
2. T tells students that she will read a story to them. They are to listen very carefully. They are to pay attention and learn from the story.
3. T reads story to the end.
4. Discuss the story to find out where comprehension broke down.
5. T tells students she will read the story a second time. This time some students will act it out. But first, they have to decide who the characters are and where the settings of the story are. Students list the characters and settings for the teacher to record.
6. T explains that the characters don't speak in this enactment. The teacher will read (narrate) and the characters will act out the words she reads.
7. Teachers and students cast the characters (choose a student to act each role) and decide where each part will take place in the classroom.
8. Characters take their places.
9. T reads and characters act out the story for the second read.
10. T asks students to tell what they understand about the story after they acted it out that they didn't understand before.

Students EXPLAIN

Discuss: did acting out the story help them understand the story better? Tell your partner what you understand about the story after the acting it out that you didn't understand before.

EVALUATE LEARNING TARGET

Ask students if they remember what word goes at the end of this sentence.

“*To help me read, I can _____.*” (act out stories)

Materials:

1. Write learning target where it can be seen.
2. Each student needs a partner with whom they can work peacefully.
3. Display the learning target like this: To help me read, I can _____.
4. Select a challenging TEXT to read aloud (1-2 years above grade level).

→ **TALKING EXIT SLIP** (Students talk; teacher records.)

Ask students to tell you what they learned about how to read better from this lesson.

Tell them that you will write what they say in your notebook because you're so interested.

With older learners, students write in the reflection notebooks so they have a record of their learning for the day.

EXTEND

1. Step #5: Embed the teaching of characterization into this lesson. T asks students to name a character in the story. Students name 3 characteristics to describe each. Teacher selects students to play the roles who can display those characteristics. For example, in Little Red Riding Hood, students might say that Red is brave, disobedient, and helpful. The teacher would then say, who thinks they can play a character that is brave, disobedient and helpful?
2. Students EXPLAIN: Ask students to retell the story based on the 2 readings and the mimed, mini-play the class or group just acted out.
3. Retelling and Drama Unit (current as of 1/9/12)
[http://tccl.rit.albany.edu/knilt/index.php/Vocabulary_teaching_strategy_Unit_2 : RETELLING AND DRAMA UNIT](http://tccl.rit.albany.edu/knilt/index.php/Vocabulary_teaching_strategy_Unit_2:_RETELLING_AND_DRAMA_UNIT)
<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/retellings-through-drama>
4. Drama Work Stations (current as of 1/9/12)
Debbie Diller: <http://debbiediller.wordpress.com/2009/09/16/drama-work-stations/>

By slowing down and rereading, readers discover rich detail they may skip over normally. Many of us are not “detail readers.” We are “plot readers.” To help children pay attention to detail, ask them to act out a passage from a text.

---Karen Haag