Using Drama to Teach ESL

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EDUC 647
Today’s Agenda

- A pedagogical justification for using drama
- Discuss how to organize a drama-based ESL class or integrate drama-based activities
- Practice activities experientially
- Get a taste of puppetry
My Introduction to Drama

- Antony and Cleopatra
- All things drama
- ITA Program
- From English Language Learners to doctoral students
Why Use Drama?

- It is motivating
- Promotes unity
  - lowers the affective filter
  - creates risk-taking atmosphere
- Builds communicative confidence
  - fosters ego permeability
  - Richard Via: the power of wedding
    - the body and voice
  - A student transformed
- Provides a meaningful context for learning
Why Use Drama...continued

- Helps students step into the “skin” of their second culture
- Instills the “third dimension” often missing in role plays

Four elements of dramatic activities:
1. Setting (where am I?), 2. Character (who am I?)
3. Action (what is happening?)
4. emotion (How do I feel about it?)
Why Use Drama...continued

- Builds oral intelligibility
- Restores dignity to the young adult, adult learner
- Encompasses all of Gardner’s Multiple intelligences
Multiple Intelligences

- Verbal-linguistic intelligence
- Mathematical, logical intelligence
- Visual-spatial intelligence
- Bodily-kinesthetetic intelligence
- Musical intelligence
- Interpersonal intelligence
- Intrapersonal, spiritual intelligence
- Naturalistic intelligence
Focus Skill Areas of a Drama/ESL Class

- Group Development
- Voice
- Observation
- Energy
- Movement
- Concentration
- Spontaneity
- Creativity
- Mechanics
One way to Organize a Drama Class

A. Relaxation (universal application)
B. Physical Warm Up (universal...
C. Voice Warm Up
D. Rehearsal/Performance/Feedback/Critiques
E. New Activity
F. Cool Down
Puppetry
History of Puppetry

- Found in virtually all cultures
- A means to provide oral history, traditions to illiterate members of society
- A veiled means of protest
Modern Applications of Puppetry

- Address sensitive topics (Mister Rogers)
- Give message in culturally sensitive ways (Jim Henson)
- Reach students without preaching (schools)
The power of puppetry:

- Providing a *true* mask
What is a puppet?

- Anything you bring to life. . .
Do’s and Don’ts

- Do Have a theater
- Do Use puppets to introduce/reinforce
- Do Draw upon a wide variety of material:
  - Fairy stories
  - Nursery rhymes
  - Ballads
  - Children’s stories
  - Movie scenes
  - TV episodes
  - Students’ own stories
Do Give students time to rehearse
Do include the elements that contribute to
making a real performance (title/marquee, program, introduction, applause)
Do not let students use high, squeaky, incomprehensible voices
Do have students project
Do have fun!