Reader's theater

Reader's theater can increase fluency and comprehension, assists in learning vocabulary and develops poise, oral language skills and positive interaction with peers.

Lesson plans included give suggested discussions, questions, connections, scripture references, character building exercises and more.

How to start

Choose a script, pass out to students
Model with a think aloud (see http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/building-reading-comprehension-through-139.html?tab=1#tabs for more info on the think aloud technique)
Go over key vocabulary (1-3 words maximum)
Assign roles and/or groups (think jigsaw technique with several groups, each group does a scene)
Have students highlight their lines as they do independent silent practice.
Discuss characterization
Small group practice (read through twice, first for flow, then for characterization, student led with teacher monitoring)
Discuss concepts, big picture, plot
Rehearse again (as much as needed, teacher rotating through groups and coaching)
Perform

Resources

http://www.foolsforchrist.net Fools for Christ website – royalty free scripts including reader's theater, choral readings, lesson plans and more.

http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Store/Kathleen-Applebee - secular teaching materials for a small fee.

Adaptations

ELL's, reluctant readers, shy students can be 1) special effects (FX) creating and presenting charts, diagrams, visual aids, etc. 2) assistant director's (give feedback, organize)

Research

The National Reading Panel has identified fluency as a prominent cause of reading comprehension problems which ultimately affect overall reading development. An estimated 75% of students who are poor readers in third grade continue to be lower achieving readers in ninth grade. Fluency increased, comprehension did not on STAR testing. 2011

Research indicates Readers' Theater is beneficial for fluency, motivation to read and supportive of independent student group repeated practice, is interactive, provides opportunities for oral reading, fosters engagement with the text that enhances comprehension of the specific text through familiarity and discussion. (2006)

The conclusion was that a highly controlled application of Readers Theatre for a limited time produced moderate effects in reading recognition and comprehension. The effects were larger for curriculum-based assessment (unit test) and smaller for standardized assessments (STAR). The study showed a clear advantage for the use of Readers Theatre over standard reading instruction.

Another Reader's Theater study using classroom curriculum connecting content and domain knowledge with fluency practice rather than readymade scripts written by others led to longer reading periods and immersion with the texts increasing both fluency and comprehension. The disadvantage was the demands on teacher and classroom time. . Based on discussions with participating teachers pre-scripted basal stories should be the first step so teachers build their own implementation skills while seeing more immediate student results with less initial effort and instructional time (2007)

Readers' Theatre is a strategy that can assist students with the difficulty of the vocabulary and concepts and help them become fluent readers of science content material (2007)

Assessment – sample rubric (done using Rubistar, **rubistar**.4teachers.org/)

CATEGORY	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
Preparedness	Student is completely prepared and has obviously rehearsed.	Student seems pretty prepared but might have needed a couple more rehearsals.	The student is somewhat prepared, but it is clear that rehearsal was lacking.	Student does not seem at all prepared to present.
Speaks Clearly	Speaks clearly and distinctly all (100-95%) the time, and mispronounces no words.	Speaks clearly and distinctly all (100-95%) the time, but mispronounces one word.	Speaks clearly and distinctly most (94-85%) of the time. Mispronounces no more than one word.	Often mumbles or can not be understood OR mispronounces more than one word.
Volume	Volume is loud enough to be heard by all audience members throughout the presentation.	Volume is loud enough to be heard by all audience members at least 90% of the time.	Volume is loud enough to be heard by all audience members at least 80% of the time.	Volume often too soft to be heard by all audience members.
Listens for cues	Listens intently. Ready with next line without hesitation. Does not make distracting noises or movements.	Listens intently but may be slow to pick up 1-2 cues. No distracting noise or movement.	Sometimes does not appear to be listening but is not distracting. Needs reminder to speak 1-2 times.	Sometimes does not appear to be listening and has distracting noises or movements. Misses more than 2 cues.
Comprehension	Student is able to accurately answer almost all questions posed about the topic.	Student is able to accurately answer most questions posed about the topic.	Student is able to accurately answer a few questions posed about the topic.	Student is unable to accurately answer questions about the topic.
Props	Student created visuals, FX, etc. show considerable work/creativity and make the presentation more clear or enjoyable.	Student created visuals, FX, etc. add to the presentation to make it more clear or enjoyable.	Student created visuals, FX, etc. show little thought or creativity, neither adding to nor taking away from the presentation.	Student created visuals, FX, etc. detract from the presentation.