

How to Approach a Story Theater Project

By Glenda Bonin, Storyteller © 2010

The following outline is provided as a suggested guide when considering a story theater project for your school. It is important to start planning six to twelve months ahead to ensure success.

1. Discuss ideas for the project with a committee of key people.
2. Identify the focus or learning desired for participating students.
3. Talk about how the project can tie into the school curriculum.
4. Select the primary (core) group of students who will benefit most from the experience.
5. Review the school schedule to identify the ideal time for the project.
6. Develop a time line with the desired number of weeks needed to ensure the success of the project.
7. Determine space needed to accommodate project activities.
8. Identify the person or group of people to oversee the project.
9. Determine a budget, and apply for grants if available.
10. Discuss how learning will be evaluated.
11. Initiate a backward mapping process to serve as a guide to accomplish project goals and activities in the time allowed.
12. Present the project plans to the staff to establish a level of understanding, cooperation and enthusiasm.

In a well-planned school story theater project, you can expect students to discover and refine new ways to approach and integrate skills essential for a lifetime of learning. Participating students develop **critical thinking skills** as they make choices about what they will do and how they will contribute to the production. **Social and emotional learning skills** are reinforced during every phase of putting on a show, since collaboration and cooperation are essential components in any group production.

Lesson plans to guide each group toward the final event are vital, but they must allow for the kind of changes that sometimes interrupt the regular school schedule. This is why I usually recommend that four weeks be devoted to a project such as this. This time commitment represents 80 hours of student contact throughout the school, with half of that time dedicated to the core group.

If you need more information about this subject, or if you would like my advice about a specific project you have in mind, I am more than happy to provide you with the benefit of my past experiences. When I am not at a school working with students, you can reach me by phone (520-235-4171 or 888-252-3033).