

Puppets as Transition Devices

Excerpted from “Puppet Power” workshop by Wolf Trap Master Teaching Artist Joe Pipik

Transition Device

One very popular use for a puppet is to use it as a transition into a new subject. When introducing a new subject, the puppet character can help assess the familiarity, point of reference, and knowledge base of the children. In reviewing a subject, the puppet (you) can check retention of important key points. The puppet character can function in a variety of ways.

A. Concrete representative of new subject

- Farmer or farm animal for farm unit
- Doctor or dentist for hygiene unit
- Historical or literary figure

Good morning! My name is Goose—Mother Goose. Do you children know any of my rhymes?

(...Or use an unknown character from a story or rhyme such as Miss Muffet’s spider or Little Red Riding Hood’s brother)

B. Class mascot or random visitors

- Cuddly friend or pet for class (dog, cat, bear, etc...). A simple “Hey, what’s up?” can lead into any topic.
- Stranger

Example:

Teacher: *Well, who are you?*

Puppet: *I’m a wizard, and I heard there was going to be a little magic here, so I thought maybe I’d learn some new tricks.*

Teacher: *Well, we are talking about dinosaurs.*

Puppet: *Well, how about a magic spell to go back in time and meet one?*

C. Reoccurring theme character

Oh, look who’s here. It must be lunch time. (...or clean-up time, time for coats, math adventure time, etc.)

Who’s my line leader? Here are the alligator eyes.

What kind of bodies do alligators have?

Right, long and straight. Show me.