

Arts Foundations Theater Lesson

Expressive Body

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Enduring Understanding

Using exaggerated physical expression can convey characters and actions.

Lesson Description (Use for family communication and displaying student art)

Students are introduced to the fundamental tools an actor uses to create a character. Students start out by understanding the concept of "neutral" (moving without any characterizations). Students then make physical choices with their bodies and faces to create statues of a given character or feeling. Finally, students apply exaggeration to their statues to enlarge their physical choices and communicate those choices to an audience.

Learning Targets and Assessment Criteria

Target: Recognizes and uses actor neutral.

Criteria: Moves and freezes normally.

Target: Understands and makes a statue.

Criteria: Holds an exaggerated, frozen position.

Target: Makes a specific physical choice to convey character and action.

Criteria: Uses body shape, facial expression, and gesture choices to communicate who he/she is and what he/she is doing.

Target: Communicates to others.

Criteria: Actively listens; expresses ideas – visually/physically/verbally; responds to others.

Vocabulary

Arts:
Body Shape
Communication
Exaggeration
Expressive Body
Facial Expression
Freeze
Gesture
Neutral
Physical Choice
Statue

Materials

Museum Artworks or Performance

Seattle, WA

Book-It Repertory Theatre
Living Voices
Seattle Children’s Theatre

Tacoma, WA

Broadway Center for the Performing Arts

Materials

Class Assessment Worksheet

Learning Standards

WA Arts Learning Standards in Theatre

For the full description of each standard, see:

<http://www.k12.wa.us/Arts/Standards>

Creating (Character, Movement, Gesture, Facial Expression, Exaggeration)

1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
2. Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
3. Refine and complete artistic work.

Performing/Presenting/Producing

4. Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.
5. Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

Responding

7. Perceive and analyze artistic work.
9. Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

Early Learning Guidelines (Pre-K – Grade 3)

For a full description of Washington State Early Learning and Child Development Guidelines see:

<https://www.del.wa.gov/sites/default/files/imported/publications/development/docs/guidelines.pdf>

- (Age 4-5) 3. Touching, seeing, hearing and moving around: Using the large muscles (gross motor skills); move with purpose from one place to another using the whole body.
(Age 4-5) 5. Communicating: Speaking and listening: use words to describe actions; listen to others.
(Age 4-5) 6. Learning about my world: Arts: show creativity and imagination; perform elements of drama; participate in dramatic play.

ICON KEY:

-  = Indicates note or reminder for teacher
-  = Embedded assessment points in the lesson

Pre-Teach

Define the concept of an “actor” as a performing artist who makes physical and vocal choices to portray a character and tell stories. Introduce this lesson as a means of exploring how actors use their bodies to convey actions and characters.

Lesson Steps Outline

1. Introduce actor neutral and concept of freeze.

2. Guide students to freeze and move through space.

Criteria-based teacher checklist: Moves and freezes normally.

3. Guide directional change.

4. Lead Statue exercise. Cue students. After a few statues, introduce the concept of exaggeration and the 21st century skill of communication.

Criteria-based teacher checklist: Holds an exaggerated, frozen position. Actively listens; expresses ideas – visually/physically/verbally; responds to others.

5. Lead *I Wish I Had a Picture* exercise performance and response.

Criteria-based teacher checklist, peer/group reflection: Uses body shape, facial expression, and gesture choices to communicate who he/she is and what he/she is doing.

LESSON STEPS

☐ Pre-determine how the room will be set-up for students to move through space — desks moved to the side or students moving among the desks.

1. Introduce actor **neutral** and concept of freeze.

- *Walk around the class as yourself.*
- *In theater, we call movement without character added to it neutral.*
- *With no voices and no touching anyone else, walk around the room. Freeze.*



Expressive Body
Steps 1-4

2. Guide students to freeze and move through space.

- *Move through the space. When I call "Freeze!" freeze wherever you are and turn your body into a statue.*

☑ **Criteria-based teacher checklist:** Moves and freezes normally.

3. Guide directional change.

- *When I clap my hands, change direction and keep moving. I am looking for an instant change with focus and purpose.*
- *You can make a statue as quickly as changing direction.*

4. Lead Statue exercise. Cue students. After a few statues, introduce the concept of **exaggeration** and the 21st century skill of communication.

☐ Options for words to cue students: police officer, teacher, pirate, rock star, baby, tiger, astronaut, wizard, monkey, baseball player, etc.

- *When I call out a word, turn your body into a statue of that word — whatever it looks like to you. It's OK if your statue doesn't look like anyone else's.*
- *Remember, statues do not talk or move. Use your whole face and body.*
- *Now I want you to exaggerate your statue, make it ten times bigger! Use your Expressive Body to exaggerate the statue you already have. Whatever you're doing, do it more.*
- *This time, choose your own statue. It could be one you have already done or a new one that is your own idea.*



Prompting for Creativity

Instruct students to utilize the 21st Century Skill of communication by sharing their exaggerated statue with another student. Have students fill out Communication Self-Assessment Worksheet.

- *Now, turn to a student that is near you and take turns sharing your exaggerated statue. You are communicating your ideas and expressing your choices to another.*
- *Ask your partner if he or she has any ideas for how you communicate your statue even better. What could you exaggerate even more?*

Criteria-based teacher and self-assessment checklist: Holds an exaggerated, frozen position. Actively listens; expresses ideas – visually/physically/verbally; responds to others.

5. Lead *I Wish I Had a Picture* exercise performance and response.

Pre-determine how the room will be set-up for students to be actors and audience. Divide the class in half with half performing and the rest responding. Reverse roles.

- *We are going to create statues of characters and actions in specific settings.*
- *We're going to start by interpreting a word. I'll call out a setting (playground, store, gym, etc.).*
- *When I say "3, 2, 1, Freeze!" make a committed physical choice and create a frozen statue of someone or something in the setting. Think about who or what you might be and what you're doing. 3, 2, 1, Freeze!*
- *Audience, what characters and actions do you see?*
- *Actors, now exaggerate — whatever you're doing in your statue, expand your choice by 100%.*
- *Audience, what changes did you see in face and body between the first and second statues? What happened when the actors exaggerated?*
- *When you respond to the creative choices of others, you are communicating.*

Criteria-based teacher checklist, peer/group reflection: Uses body shape, facial expression, and gesture choices to communicate who he/she is and what he/she is doing.

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Teachers may choose to use or adapt the following self-assessment tool.

STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

Discipline	Theater	Theater	Theater 21 st Century Skill	Theater	Total
Concept	Actor Neutral	Statue	Communication	Character	4
Criteria	Moves and freezes normally.	Holds an exaggerated, frozen position.	Actively listens; expresses ideas – visually/physically/verbally; responds to others.	Uses body shape, facial expression, and gesture choices to communicate who he/she is and what he/she is doing.	
Student Name					

COMMUNICATION SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

Put a check next to each of the ways you communicated effectively with a partner in creating your statues:

_____ I listened to my partner’s ideas.

One idea that my partner suggested for how I could improve my statue was:

_____ I made a change to how I was expressing my statue.

One way I changed my statue in response to my partner’s idea(s) was:

_____ I responded to my partner’s statue.

One idea I offered my partner to help him or her exaggerate his or her statue was:

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CLASS ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

Discipline	Theater	Theater	Theater 21 st Century Skill	Theater	Total
Concept	Actor Neutral	Statue	Communication	Character	4
Criteria	Moves and freezes normally.	Holds an exaggerated, frozen position.	Actively listens; expresses ideas – visually/physically/verbally; responds to others.	Uses body shape, facial expression, and gesture choices to communicate who he/she is and what he/she is doing.	
Student Name					
1.					
2.					
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26.					
27.					
28.					
29.					
30.					
Total					
Percentage					

What was effective in the lesson? Why?

What do I want to consider for the next time I teach this lesson?

How could I connect the concepts in this lesson with other disciplines?

Teacher: _____

Date: _____

THEATER LESSON: EXPRESSIVE BODY

Dear Family:

Today your child participated in an **Arts** lesson. We talked about developing an Expressive Body so that we could show characters effectively, the way actors do.

- We discovered how to create characters and show actions.
- We explored how to use exaggeration.
- We created statues in different environments.
- We used the 21st Century skill of COMMUNICATION by actively listening, expressing our ideas and responding to others.

At home, you could ask your child to teach you to show an actor neutral position and practice using the Expressive Body to create statues of different characters.

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