Theater and Writing Infused Lesson

Lesson One: *The Super Expressive Body – Character Attributes*
Author: Dave Quicksall   Grade Level: Fourth

Enduring Understanding

Using exaggerated and dynamic physical expression can convey action, emotion/states of being, and character attributes in order to tell stories.

Lesson Description (Use for family communication and displaying student art)
Students use their bodies to convey characters, actions and feelings. Working in small groups, the students dramatically transform an everyday item into something else. Students reflect on and record the actions that they see in performance.

Learning Targets and Assessment Criteria

Target: Understands and demonstrates an active freeze.
  Criteria: Holds a frozen position that represents a character, emotion, or state of being.

Target: Understands and uses exaggeration.
  Criteria: Shifts frozen position to increase the size/dimensions of a specific physical choice.

Target: Makes a specific physical choice to convey character.
  Criteria: Uses posture, movement, and facial expression choices to communicate a specific person or animal.

Target: Makes a specific physical choice to convey an action.
  Criteria: Uses movement and gesture to communicate who a character is and what a character is doing.

Target: Describes the actions seen in a dramatic story.
  Criteria: Uses specific words: specific nouns to tell who a character is and vivid verbs to tell what a character is doing.

Vocabulary	**Materials**	**Learning Standards**
Arts Infused:	**Museum Artworks or Performance**	**WA Arts State Grade Level Expectations**
Action		*For the full description of each WA State Arts Grade*
Character	**Seattle, WA**	*Level Expectation, see:*
	Book-It Repertory Theater	*http://www.k12.wa.us/Arts/Standards*
Writing:	Seattle Children's Theatre	1.2.1 Skills and techniques: *Facial expressions,*
Precise words: verbs,		*gestures, movements*
nouns	**Tacoma, WA**	1.4.1 Audience conventions
	Broadway Center for the Performing Arts	2.1.1 Creative process
Arts:		2.2.1 Performance process
Active freeze	**Materials**	2.3.1 Responding process
Body	Whiteboard or chart paper & markers;	3.1.1 Communicates through the arts
Exaggeration	Arts Impact journal; Pencil;	
Gesture	Miscellaneous "hand held props"	**Common Core State Standards in ELA**
Movement		**(Language)**
Neutral	**Tools**	For a full description of CCSS Standards by grade
Physical choice	Body, voice, imagination	level see:
Posture		http://www.k12.wa.us/CoreStandards/ELAstandards/
Scene		
Super Expressive Body		

W.4.2. Convey ideas/information clearly: use precise language
W.2.3. Use descriptive detail: use concrete words to to convey experiences/events precisely
W.2.8. Recall information from experience
L.2.2. Conventions of spelling
L.2.3. Knowledge of language: choose words to convey ideas precisely
L.2.6. Acquire and use accurately specific words and phrases that signal actions, emotions/states of being

ICON KEY:

📖 = Notes specific *Writers Workshop* Curriculum strategies addressed

📑 = Indicates note or reminder for teacher

☑ = Embedded assessment points in the lesson

COLOR CODING for ARTS AND LITERACY INFUSED PROCESSES:

GENERATE IDEAS	CONSTRUCT MEANING	SELF-REFLECT
Gather Information • From WHAT you know • From WHO you know • Brainstorm	• Create drafts • Organize ideas • Make a choice	• Check in with self • Check in with others • Refine work

Pre-Teach

This lesson is the first lesson in a series of three writing infused lessons. LESSON PREP: Create a collection of "hand held props" for this lesson. These props should be items found in everyday life that can be held in one hand. Examples: basket, large wooden spoon, old phone, skillet, egg beater, etc. Create a Drama Word Wall to compile the different nouns, action words, and descriptive words that the students come up with during the course of brainstorming ideas.

Lesson Steps Outline

1. WARM UP. Introduce concept of neutral. Instruct students to walk around the class and change direction as themselves (neutral).

☑ Criteria-based room scan.

2. Review the concept of character by playing the game of "Statues."

☑ Criteria-based teacher checklist—room scan, reverse checklist: Holds a frozen position that represents a character, emotion, or state of being.

3. Introduce concept of exaggeration. Continue "Statues" by adding exaggeration using other characters/emotions/states of being.

☑ Criteria-based teacher checklist—room scan, reverse checklist: Shifts frozen position to increase the size/dimensions of a specific physical choice.

4. Continue "Statues" with movement.

☑ Criteria-based checklist—room scan, reverse checklist: Uses movement and gesture to communicate who a character is and what a character is doing.

5. In small groups, guide students in developing character attributes by using pantomime to transform a hand-held prop into something else.

6. Guide students as they show their scenes and lead a brief reflection after each presentation.

☑ Criteria-based teacher checklist; group reflection; written response: Uses specific words: specific nouns to tell who a character is and vivid verbs to tell what a character is doing.

7. Guide reflection.

☑ Criteria-based group reflection.

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.

▤ Have enough "hand-held props" so that each group has one to work with.

1. WARM UP. Introduce the concept of neutral. Instruct students to walk around the class as themselves (neutral). Guide directional change while walking around in neutral.

- *In theater, we call movement without character added to it as* neutral*. When you are acting as yourself, you are neutral.*

- *When I clap my hands—you change direction.*

- *Change direction quickly and sharply without thinking about it.*

- *Change direction every time I clap.*

☑ Criteria-based room scan.

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2. Review the concept of character by playing the game of "Statues."

📖 Using schema

- *We will walk around the room in neutral.*

- *I will shout out "Freeze!" Freeze wherever you are.*

- *I will then call out a character or feeling. Turn your body into a statue of what I call out.*

☑ Criteria-based teacher checklist—room scan, reverse checklist: Holds a frozen position that represents a character, emotion, or state of being.

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3. Introduce concept of exaggeration. Continue "Statues" by adding exaggeration using other characters/emotions/states of being: policeman, teacher, pirate, rock star, baby, tiger, astronaut, wizard, monkey, etc. Happy, sad, angry, frustrated, etc.

📖 Using schema

- *When I call out a word and you know what to do with your bodies, you are generating ideas! You are able to make a choice from what you already know – this is your background knowledge, actors use this tool all the time.*

- *Now, I want you to exaggerate your statue; make it ten times bigger! Use your* Super Expressive Bodies *to exaggerate the statue you already have.*

- *Whatever you're doing, do it more.*

☑ Criteria-based teacher checklist—room scan, reverse checklist: Shifts frozen position to increase the size/dimensions of a specific physical choice.

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4. Continue "Statues" adding movement.

📖 Using schema

- *In the theater, an actor's main job is to play a character in order to tell a story. Now, we are going to use our Super Expressive Bodies to move and act like characters!*

- *First, I want you to make a statue of _____.*

- *Now, without using your voices I want you to move around the room like this character would move. I'll be looking to see if you also use your faces—facial expression is an important tool an actor uses.*

- *You can't touch anyone else in the room as you move around as the character.*

- *You are constructing meaning as an artist when you brainstorm for ideas and make a choice.*

☑ Criteria-based checklist—room scan, reverse checklist: Uses movement and gesture to communicate who a character is and what a character is doing.

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5. In small groups, guide students in developing character attributes by using pantomime to transform a hand-held prop into something else.

📖 Mini-lesson: Pantomime, using schema, small moments.

▤ Divide class into small groups (2-3 students/group). Give each group a hand-held prop (an everyday item). Instruct groups to use pantomime to transform the prop into something other than what it literally is.

- *You have been working on your own to create characters but actors very rarely work all by themselves on the stage–they have scene partners. In your group, you will have time to generate ideas and rehearse a short scene that you will present to the class.*

- *Each group has an item found in everyday life. You are going to use it as a "hand-held prop."*

- *"Prop" is a theater term that is short for a "stage property." A prop is any article, other than a piece of scenery or a costume, that is used by an actor on stage.*

- *Your group's job is to dramatically turn your prop into something else–it can be anything except what it really is. For example, what am I turning this prop into?*

▤ Demonstrate how a prop can be turned into something else (example: change a spoon into a cell phone).

- *Each member of the group must be a character in the story you are telling. You are constructing meaning as an actor when you brainstorm for ideas and make a choice.*

- *Your main job as actors is to let us know what the prop is through your actions. You cannot talk during the scene – we must guess it through your physical choices alone.*

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6. Guide students as they show their scenes and lead a brief reflection after each presentation. Students will use their journals to record what they observe in each presentation.

📖 Looking closely – observing, labeling, and listing; independent/guided writing.

- *Before we present our scenes, take out your Arts Impact Journals. After each scene is presented, you need to write down what the prop has been turned into and what actions you identified.*

▤ First scene is presented.

- *Let's reflect. Now, write down what the group turned the prop into.*

- *How do you know?*

- *What actions did you see that conveyed that idea?*

- *Be specific. Use precise words: vivid verbs and specific nouns.*

▤ Continue until all scenes are presented. After all the scenes are finished, lead a quick "report out" on each presentation – what was the prop? What actions did you see? Record descriptive words/vivid verbs on word wall.

☑ Criteria-based teacher checklist; group reflection; written response: Uses specific words: specific nouns to tell who a character is and vivid verbs to tell what a character is doing.

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7. Guide reflection.

- *What were the challenges of "turning" a prop into something else?*

- *How did you decide on what to turn the prop into?*

- *How did you use teamwork to create the scene?*

- *How did you solve the problem with your partners?*

☑ Criteria-based group reflection.

STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

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

Disciplines	THEATER				WRITING		Total 6
	Characterization						
Concept	Statues	Exaggeration	Posture and Movement Facial Expression		Descriptive Language		
Criteria Student Name	Holds a frozen position that represents a character, emotion, or state of being	Shifts frozen position to increase the size/dimensions of a specific physical choice	Uses posture, movement and facial expression choices to communicate a specific person or animal	Uses movement and gesture to communicate what a character is doing	Uses specific words: specific nouns to tell who a character is	Uses specific words: vivid verbs to tell what a character is doing	

CLASS ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

Disciplines	THEATER				WRITING		Total 6
		Characterization					
Concept	Statues	Exaggeration	Posture and Movement Facial Expression		Description Language		
Criteria Student Name	Holds a frozen position that represents a character, emotion, or state of being	Shifts frozen position to increase the size/dimensions of a specific physical choice	Uses posture, movement and facial expression choices to communicate a specific person or animal	Uses movement and gesture to communicate what a character is doing	Uses specific words: specific nouns to tell who a character is	Uses specific words: vivid verbs to tell what a character is doing	
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Total							
Percentage							

What was effective in the lesson? Why?

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

What were the strongest connections between theater and writing?

Teacher: _____   Date: _____

ARTS AND WRITING LESSON: _The Super Expressive Body – Character Attributes_

Dear Family:

Today your child participated in an **Arts and Writing** lesson. We talked about . . .

- We made our bodies into "statues" to show a frozen picture of a character or an emotion.

- We increased the size of our gestures—made them bigger to exaggerate our statues.

- We moved around the room as different kinds of characters.

- We worked with partners to create a story using nothing but our bodies and a "hand-held prop."

- We used specific nouns to describe who the character was and vivid verbs to describe what they were doing.

You could play the "Prop Game" with your family. Imaginatively turn a household item into something else and have others try to guess what it is.

Enduring Understanding

Using exaggerated and dynamic physical expression can convey action, emotion/states of being, and character attributes in order to tell stories.