

ARTS IMPACT LESSON PLAN

Theater and Writing Infused Lesson

Lesson One: *The Super Expressive Body – Actions and Character*

Author: Dave Quicksall Grade Level: Fifth

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 explore how to use their bodies to make characters and show emotions. Students work in pairs to create, rehearse and present short two-character scenes. Students will use powerful verbs and specific descriptors to describe what they see other actors doing.

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: Makes a specific physical choice to convey character.

Criteria: Uses posture and movement choices to communicate a specific person or animal.

Target: Makes specific physical choices working with a partner to convey a scene.

Criteria: Uses movement and gesture to communicate whom the characters are and what the characters are doing.

Target: Describes the actions seen in a dramatic story.

Criteria: Uses precise language: specific descriptors to tell who the characters are and powerful verbs to tell what a character is doing.

Vocabulary

Arts Infused:

Action
Character
Scene

Writing:

Powerful verbs
Specific descriptors

Arts:

Active freeze
Body
Gesture
Movement
Neutral
Physical choice
Posture
Super Expressive Body

Materials

Museum Artworks or Performance

Seattle, WA

Book-It Repertory Theater
Seattle Children's Theatre

Tacoma, WA

Broadway Center for the Performing Arts

Materials

Whiteboard or chart paper & markers;
Arts Impact journal; Lesson worksheet;
Pencil; White cardstock: 8.5x11", copy
character cards from lesson, cut into
individual cards

Tools

Body, voice, imagination

Learning Standards

WA Arts State Grade Level Expectations

For the full description of each WA State Arts Grade Level Expectation, see:

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

- 1.1.1 Concepts: *Character, actions, setting*
- 1.2.1 Skills and techniques: *Given circumstances, facial expressions, gestures, movements*
- 1.2.3 Skills and techniques: *Creates a character and objective*
- 1.4.1 Audience skills
- 2.1.1 Creative process
- 2.2.1 Performance process
- 2.3.1 Responding process
- 3.1.1 Communicates through the arts

Common Core State Standards in ELA (Language)

For a full description of CCSS Standards by grade level see:

<http://www.k12.wa.us/CoreStandards/ELAstandards/>

W.5.2. Convey ideas/information clearly: use precise language

continued

W.5.3. Use descriptive detail: use concrete words/sensory details to convey events precisely
W.5.4. Produce clear and coherent writing
W.5.8. Recall information from experience
L.5.2. Conventions of spelling
L.5.6. Acquire and use accurately specific words and phrases

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
<p>Gather Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• From WHAT you know• From WHO you know• Brainstorm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create drafts• Organize ideas• Make a choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 Drama Word Wall to compile the different action words and descriptive words that the students come up with during the course of the lesson. Prepare Character Cards for distribution to the students.

Lesson Steps Outline

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

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. Continue “Statues” adding movement.

Criteria-based teacher checklist—room scan, reverse checklist: Uses posture and movement choices to communicate a specific person or animal.

4. In pairs, guide students in developing a short dramatic scene, using movement and gesture to communicate who the characters are and what they are doing.

5. Guide the students as they present their scenes. Guide audience as they record their observations in their Arts Impact journals. Lead a short group reflection after all the scenes have been shown.

Criteria-based teacher checklist; self-assessment; group reflection: Uses movement and gesture to communicate who the characters are and what the characters are doing.

6. Guide self-reflection.

Criteria-based self-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.

1. 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.*
-

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.

3. 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 teacher checklist—room scan, reverse checklist: Uses posture and movement choices to communicate a specific person or animal.

4. In pairs, guide students in developing a short dramatic scene, using movement and gesture to communicate who the characters are and what they are doing.

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

📖 Divide the class into pairs, who will work together to develop a short dramatic scene. Each pair draws a character card.

📖 Character cards are found at the end of this lesson (feel free to add to them).

- *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.*
- *With your partner, you will have time to **generate ideas** and rehearse a short scene that you will present to the class.*
- *I have a deck of character cards. Each duo will draw one card. Your job is to communicate that character with actions only. **Generate ideas together.***
- *Use your background knowledge by tapping into whom you know and what you know.*
- *You have to decide who will play the character on the card and whom the other character in the short scene must be in order to tell the story.*
- *Your characters must interact with each other – how do they relate to one another?*
- *You cannot talk during the scene, actions only! You have to be very clear about what you are doing because the audience will try to guess who your characters are.*
- *So, keep your characters a secret from the others!*
- ***You are constructing meaning as actors in an ensemble when you brainstorm together for ideas and make choices.***

5. Guide the students as they present their scenes. Guide audience as they record their observations in their Arts Impact journals. Lead a short group reflection after all the scenes have been shown.

📖 Looking closely – observing, labeling, and listing; using Writer’s notebook; guided/independent writing

📖 The Arts Journal Organizer for this step is located at the end of the lesson. Students can either copy down the organizer in their journals or can use a copy of the organizer handed out by the instructor.

- *For those of us in the audience, we have a job as well. I want you to get out your Arts Impact journals, open to the next blank page and copy down this organizer.*
- ***After each scene, I want you to write down who the characters are – you are going to reflect on what you saw.***
- *You must also write down how you figured it out by using descriptive words, including powerful verbs and specific descriptors.*

- *What actions did you see that conveyed the character?*
- *Exactly how did the character move?*
- *If you had to describe the two characters how would you describe them to someone who did not see the performance? Be specific.*

☐ Student record their observations. Lead a brief group “report out” at the end of the presentations, recording any new vivid verbs/describers on the word wall.

- *Let’s share our observations. Who were the characters?*
- *What actions did you see?*
- *What specific descriptors did you write down?*

☑ Criteria-based teacher checklist; self-assessment; group reflection: Uses movement and gesture to communicate who the characters are and what the characters are doing.

6. Guide self-reflection.

- *Why did you choose the actions that you did for your character?*
- *Why are actions important in communicating a story?*

☑ Criteria-based self-reflection.

EXTENSION: Working in pairs/small groups have the students create new characters (ones not on the cards) and short interactive scenes of their own.

The Super Expressive Body – Actions and Character Character Cards

DENTIST	WEIGHT LIFTER
WAITER/WAITRESS	COP
ROCK STAR	DOCTOR
HAIR DRESSER/ BARBER	BUS DRIVER
PHOTOGRAPHER	COOK
ASTRONAUT	BABY
TEACHER	SCIENTIST
CAR MECHANIC	SALESPERSON

The Super Expressive Body – Actions and Character Arts Journal Organizer

CHARACTER	ACTIONS	DESCRIPTIONS

ARTS IMPACT LESSON PLAN Theater and Writing Infusion

Fifth Grade Lesson One: *The Super Expressive Body – Actions and Character*

STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

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

Disciplines	THEATER			WRITING		Total 5
	Characterization			Descriptive Language Precise Language		
Concept	Statutes	Posture and Movement Facial Expression				
Criteria	Holds a frozen position that represents a character, emotion, or state of being	Uses posture, movement and facial expression choices to communicate a specific person	Uses movement and gesture to communicate who the characters are and what they are doing in a scene	Uses precise language: specific descriptors to tell who the characters are	Uses precise language: powerful verbs to tell what a character is doing	
Student Name						

ARTS IMPACT LESSON PLAN Theater and Writing Infusion

Fifth Grade Lesson One: *The Super Expressive Body – Actions and Character*

CLASS ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

Disciplines	THEATER			WRITING		Total 5
	Characterization			Descriptive Language Precise Language		
Concept	Statues	Posture and Movement Facial Expression				
Criteria	Holds a frozen position that represents a character, emotion, or state of being	Uses posture, movement and facial expression choices to communicate a specific person	Uses movement and gesture to communicate who the characters are and what they are doing in a scene	Uses precise language: specific descriptors to tell who the characters are	Uses precise language: powerful verbs to tell what a character is doing	
Student Name						
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						
8.						
9.						
10.						
11.						
12.						
13.						
14.						
15.						
16.						
17.						
18.						
19.						
20.						
21.						
22.						
23.						
24.						
25.						
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?

What were the strongest connections between theater and writing?

Teacher: _____ Date: _____

ARTS IMPACT FAMILY LETTER

ARTS AND WRITING LESSON: *The Super Expressive Body – Actions and Character*

Dear Family:

Today your child participated in an **Arts and Writing** lesson. We talked about how actors use their bodies to make characters and show emotions. We learned about how our “Super Expressive Bodies” can be used to tell stories.

- We made our bodies into “statues” to show a frozen picture of a character or an emotion.
- We moved around the room showing different kinds of characters.
- We created, rehearsed and presented a short scene based solely on a specific character.
- We used specific descriptors to describe who the characters were and powerful verbs to describe what they were doing.

You could pick a character and make a short scene about that character. Have others guess who the character is.

Enduring Understanding

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