

Theatre – Grade 5

Lesson 5 – Let Me Paint You a Picture (Status & Tableau)

CALIFORNIA ARTS STANDARD(S)

5.TH:Pr4

b. Use physical choices to create meaning in a drama/theatre work.

SDUSD Theatre Critical Concepts

Theatre Making: Acting; Theatre Making: Rehearsing; Theatre Making: Playwriting/Playmaking

OBJECTIVES

- I can demonstrate high and low status, using my actors' tools, in tableau and scene work.

VOCABULARY

- **status:** a person's social or professional standing compared to the other people in a group
- **tableau:** a frozen picture showing action

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

- [Slide Deck](#)
- Cards numbered 1 – 10

WARM UP (*Engage students, access prior learning, review, hook or activity to focus the student for learning*).

20 minutes

Part 1 (5 minutes)

- **Greet the students warmly:**
 - "Welcome to theatre class! I'm [Mx./Mr./Ms.] [Your Name]!"
- **Engage students with a clapping pattern game:**
 - Clap three times and have them mimic you. Vary the pattern until all students are focused.
- **Set expectations:**
 - "When we enter the classroom, walk quietly and sit in a circle on the floor."
- **Assign a travel goal:**
 - Example options:
 - Walk like "silent secret agents on a mission."
 - Pretend you're "time travelers stepping into a new world."
 - Strut like "parade heroes with quiet confidence."

Part 2 (15 min)

Review Prior Learning:

- Ask: "Who remembers what we learned about status last time?"
- Have students tell their neighbor. Call on one or two students to share.

Review Actor Neutral & Status Cards:

- Recap: "Actor Neutral is how we stand as actors before adding character."
- Reintroduce the status card exercise from the previous lesson:
 - Status 1 = low (e.g., slow movements, avoiding eye contact).
 - Status 10 = high (e.g., confident posture, strong eye contact).
 - Status 5 = neutral (e.g., calm and approachable).

Demonstrate Status:

- Ask three volunteers to draw a status card (secretly).
- One at a time, they walk center stage, introduce themselves, and act out their status.
- Have the audience guess their status (raise hands when numbers are called).

LESSON *(Presentation of new material, demonstration of the process, direct instruction, Application of knowledge, problem solving, corrective feedback)*

Exploring Tableau (30 minutes)

Part 1: Intro to Tableau (10 minutes)

- **Discuss** Tableau:
 - Definition: “A tableau is a frozen picture that shows action or tells a story.”
 - Importance: “It helps clarify relationships, action, and status without words.”
- **Demonstration:**
 - Select two students:
 - Student 1: A “teacher” with a middle status (e.g., neutral and calm).
 - Student 2: A “student” with a low status (e.g., defeated after failing a test).
 - Guide each to adopt a posture, gesture, or facial expression to convey status.
- **Audience Discussion:**
 - Ask: “What do you see? How do their positions tell a story?”

Part 2: Group Tableau (20 minutes)

- **Expand the Tableau:**
 - Add new characters one at a time (e.g., a parent, principal, classmates).
 - Discuss how each character’s status relates to the others.
 - Emphasize stage picture elements: levels, planes, focus, and proximity.
- **Dialogue Option (Time Permitting):**
 - Have each character create a single line of dialogue to match their role.
 - Tap students in the tableau to speak their lines individually.

STUDENT REFLECTION *(Identify problems encountered, ask and answer questions, discuss solutions and learning that took place, did students meet outcomes?)*

Part 1: Reflection Questions (2 minutes)

- “Why is an actor’s position so important?”
- “How does tableau help us tell a story without words?”

Part 2: Breathing and Mindfulness (3 minutes)

- Guide students through the “Three Breaths” routine:
 - Stand in actor neutral.
 - One hand on heart, one on belly button.
 - Close eyes, take three deep breaths (imagine smelling flowers, relax).
 - Gently pat your heart 10 times.
- Encourage calm and focus:
 - “Keep this sense of calm as you head to your next class!”