

Sample Lesson: Poetry Play

Teaching Artist: Ally Tufenkjian

Grade: 2nd

Theme of Lesson: Performing Shel Silverstein poetry

Restating of Inquiry Question:

- How do we use gesture and physical play to create images?
- How can we incorporate multiple artistic disciplines to respond to poetry?

Objectives:

- To foster community in the classroom and provide a safe space to explore and celebrate individual self-expression and identity.
- To use improv, physical exploration, sound, and visual art to challenge students to try different ways to express themselves and collaborate in a group.

Materials:

- Handout with Shel Silverstein poem
 - Index cards (for buzz words)
 - Paper and markers (for drawing in the main activity)
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1. Opening Ritual (5 min)

Objective: To get students physically warmed up, comfortable in their bodies, and ready to move. To get students listening and responding to each other in the group.

Activity Name(s): Gesture warmup

Brief Description:

-Each student says their name while doing one gesture that represents how they're feeling. The whole class will repeat that person's name and gesture as identically as possible.

2. Intro Activity (5-7 min)

Objective: To introduce the piece of poetry. To prepare students for collaboration. To have students consider ideas and images that will be the foundation for their group presentations.

Activity Name: Gestures and Images

Brief Description:

-The whole group receives the Shel Silverstein poem "Whatif."

- Brief Shel Silverstein bio will be shared.
- Students take turns reading different lines of the poem.
- Discuss: What is this poem about? Who is speaking? How does it make you feel?
- On an index card, students write five “buzz words” on a piece of paper in response to the poem. These words could be strong words from the poem or things it makes you think of.
- Students pick their favorite line from the poem and pick a gesture to go with it. They briefly explore this gesture. Then they say the line and perform the gesture altogether as a group.

3. Main Exercise (20-30 min)

Part 1:

Objective: To explore visual art, sound, and movement. To use multiple artistic forms to respond to poetry. To collaborate as a group.

Activity Name: Responding to poetry

Brief Description:

- Split into smaller groups.
- Split Silverstein’s “Whatif” poem into smaller sections of 4-5 lines and assign groups different sections.
- We’re going to bring the “Whatif” poem to life by using at least one of the following artistic methods:
 1. Visual art (drawing)
 2. Sound
 3. Movement
- You can use all three at once. Whatever you decide, each member of the group must have a job. As you craft your performance, think about incorporating the buzz words you wrote down and the gestures you created. The poem must be read aloud in the performance, but all other elements are up to you.

Part 2:

Objective: To share and respond to each other’s work.

Activity Name: Group share

Brief Description:

- Each group shares their poem as they have decided to present it.
- After each group performs, ask the class:
 1. Which artistic method(s) did you see? (visuals, sound, or movement)
 2. What was your favorite part about their performance?
 3. Did anything about their performance surprise you?

4. Closing Ritual (3-5 min)

Objective: To end class on a positive note. To hear everyone's voice a final time.

Activity Name: One-word feelings

Brief Description:

-Each student uses one word to express how they're feeling.

Multiple Intelligences Addressed:

Logical-mathematical; Musical; Spatial; Linguistic; Bodily-kinesthetic; Interpersonal; Intrapersonal; Naturalistic; Existential

Classroom Teacher Role: Principal role is to manage student behavior and support students as they develop group performances. Circulate the room during main activity and help students brainstorm. Participate in closing ritual.

Creative Elements

Skill(s): Reading, metaphor, color, image, gesture, sound, collaboration, improvisation

Theme(s): Play, Collaboration, Expression, Poetry, Imagery

Artists/ Authors/ Works of Art (to be presented as models for skills/themes identified above):
Shel Silverstein poems

Reflective Anecdotes/Student Development:

Outcomes: Leaders, Emotionally Intelligent/Expressive, Literate, Citizenship, Culturally Aware, Creative Thinkers/Imaginative

Indications:

Leaders: Students take on leadership roles and capitalize on their strengths as they create a group presentation.

Emotionally Intelligent/Expressive: Students explore their emotional experience by writing down words they notice and connect to about the poetry.

Literate: Students read the poem silently and aloud, making their own word associations, and making physical connections to a piece of writing.

Citizenship: Students cooperate and share within small groups and with their whole class.

Culturally Aware: During group work and group sharing, students must be conscious and respectful of other students' ideas and backgrounds.

Creative Thinkers/Imaginative: Students invent their own gestures, sound, and visual art to respond to poetry.

Common Core Anchor Standards:

See New York State Common Core Anchor Standards for ELA/Literacy. Identify at least two anchor standards this lesson engages. Provide code for each anchor standard identified.

Reading RL.2.4; RF.2.3; RF.2.4

Speaking & Listening SL.2.1; SL.2.2; SL.2.5

Language L.2.3; L.2.5