



Title: Collaboratively Constructing the World of the Play: Visual Dramaturgy, Soundscapes, and Tour of a Space

Grade Levels: 4 - 6

Author: Joshua Rashon Streeter

Date: July 13, 2021

Description: In this lesson, students will engage multiple ensemble-based, embodied learning strategies to explore setting. Additionally, this lesson makes use of collaborative techniques that ask students to work together to build the world of the play. This lesson can be used with any play, poem, story, or selection of text.

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will describe a setting using their 5 senses.
- Students will identify sounds that would be found in the setting.
- Students will create a musical composition (a soundscape).

SEL Competencies Taught:

Social awareness, which is the ability to take the perspective of others, demonstrate empathy, acknowledge and appreciate similarities and differences, and understand how one's actions influence and are influenced by others

2014 National Core Theatre Standards:

TH:Cr1.1.4.a. Articulate the visual details of imagined worlds, and improvised stories that support the given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Re7.1.4.a. Identify artistic choices made in a drama/theatre work through participation and observation.

TH:Cr.1.1.5.b. Propose design ideas that support the story and given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Cr2.1.6. b. Contribute ideas and accept and incorporate the ideas of others in preparing or devising drama/theatre work.

Time to Teach: 1 Class Session; 60 minutes (can be broken into smaller chunks if needed)

Materials Required for Instruction:

a larger sheet of butcher paper

markers

a piece of text (to be read out loud - a short story, a poem, a selection from a book) OR a play that the class has read

Opening:

This lesson makes use of a reflective questioning sequence called DAR or Describe-Analyze-Relate. In this scaffolded process, the aim is to get multiple responses to each question (constructivism) and students can respond in a variety of ways (verbal, drawing, gesture, etc.).

In today's lesson we will explore several activities that dive deep into setting, allowing us to explore through multiple modalities. Diving deep into setting will allow us to understand both the playwright's intentions, a designer's interpretations, and how theatre serves as a mirror to our society, specifically when thinking about how a setting onstage is inspired by the real world. Finally, all of these activities will ask us, as a group, to collaborate, noting that we can actively learn, reflect, and play together to build new understandings. Some of these activities will ask you to practice "yes, and" as you work to honor the contributions of others.

Re-cap the play you have read OR read the piece of text aloud twice.

[Visual Dramaturgy/Collective Drawing]

I'm going to lay out a larger piece of butcher paper and ask everyone to find a seat around the paper. [Or could be done in small groups with poster paper.] I'm going to pass out lots of different colors of markers, we will need to share as we want everyone to have a selection of colors to use.

Round One: *I invite you to silently draw images of the characters, places, events, and feelings that they remember most from the text on the paper, without using any words. (SEL Social Awareness)*

[Play instrumental music as they silently work (about 5 minutes).]

Possible side-coaching:

- *Make big images, we are trying to fill the paper!*
- *Consider how you are pulling ideas from the play/story.*

Now we will take a silent "gallery walk" around the paper to see all the images created in this first round.

Round Two: Now, I invite students to pick a classmate's image and add to it, without or make an entirely new image; also, you can add to as many pieces, made by drawings without adding anything directly to images that have already been created.

[Play instrumental music as they silently work (about 5 minutes).]

Possible side-coaching:

- *What important details do you remember from the story? Make sure everything you remember is here.*
- *What can you add to someone else's image to give more detail and context?*
- *Think about how color, shape, and line communicate a feeling.*

Now we will take a silent "gallery walk" around the paper to see all the images created in this second round.

Round Three: Now we will repeat this one more time, this time working to fill the white space on the paper. You can repeat ideas or images to do this or consider how images might be connected to one another and draw something to connect them.

[Play instrumental music as they silently work (about 5 minutes).]

Possible side-coaching:

- *What important details do you remember from the story? Make sure everything you remember is here.*
- *What can you add to someone else's image to give more detail and context?*
- *Think about how color, shape, and line communicate a feeling.*

Now we will take a silent "gallery walk" around the paper to see all the images created in this third round before we discuss/reflect.

Reflection: (SEL Social Awareness)

Describe: *How did it feel to work collectively on a drawing? What images do we see from the story appear on our page?*

Analyze: *What story do these images tell together? What parts of the story appear the most? Why?*

Relate: *What image/idea resonates with you the most? Tell us why/turn to a partner and share why.*

Transition: *Now that we have visually stepped into the world of the play by creating images - we are going to dive deeper into what we might hear in the setting by creating a soundscape. Let's make a seated circle to begin.*

Instructional Procedures:

[Soundscape]

What are the sounds we might hear in this setting? [Scribe.]

How might we make these sounds with our voice and body? Any other ways? What might the tempo be? The pitch? The dynamics? [Play with several sounds in this way.]

Now I would like you to select one of the sounds from our brainstorm or if you have another idea of a sound that could fit in our setting, you can select that. Once you have a sound, please turn around so that you are facing the wall, but still in a circle.

I am going to ask you to close your eyes and rehearse your sound. You are turned outward so that nobody is watching you. How might we make these sounds with our voice and body? Any other ways? What might the tempo be? The pitch? The dynamics?

Now you may all turn back inside the circle. We are going to share out sounds in a very unique way. We will all close our eyes and if I tap you on the shoulder you will turn your sound on and repeat it until I tap your shoulder again to turn you off. You will find where in the soundscape your sound fits so that we can ensure that we are hearing all the sounds at the same time. In some ways, this is like a “sound” machine, but instead of a machine with your body this is with your voice. You want to find how your sound fits into what is already happening.

[Do. Once everyone is on, have folks get louder (crescendo) and then quieter (decrescendo) until silence.]

Let’s take a moment to reflect:

Describe: What types of sounds did we use to establish a location?

Analyze: How did you make the sound? What musical choices did you make and why (pitch, tempo, etc.)

Relate: Where else might you hear these same kinds of sounds?

Transition: *Now that we have auditorily built the world of the play, we will now embody location. Please stand up, find a partner from across the circle, and then find your own place in the room.*

[Tour of a Space]

Thinking about the visual dramaturgy that we did and the soundscapes, you are now going to give your partner a “tour” of our setting. As you explain (in detail) where you are and what you see, smell, touch, taste, and hear, you will physically move through the room. [Model.] Don’t just describe the physical layout, have them experience it by leading them through it.

Decide who will be partner A and who will be partner 1. Partner A will be the tour guide first. [Do.] Now we will switch and Partner 1 will be the tour guide. [Do.]

Let's make a circle to reflect.

Describe: How did it feel to be the tour guide? How did it feel to be lead on the tour?

Analyze: How did you use your 5 senses in this activity? Thinking about the tour, what things in our setting would you see? taste? touch? and smell?

Relate: How might this deepen your work as a designer? How might this deepen your work as an actor? (SEL Social Awareness- SEL Self Awareness)

Reflect:

Let's take a final moment to reflect on our whole lesson.

Our lesson today focused on social awareness, which is the ability to take the perspective of others, demonstrate empathy, acknowledge and appreciate similarities and differences, and understand how one's actions influence and are influenced by others.

Describe: What did we do today to explore the setting of our play/story/text? How were we asked to work as an ensemble or collaborators?

Analyze: Why is it important to build the world of the play together? Did you notice any different ideas that came up that you appreciated, but also fit within the given circumstances of the play/story/text?

Relate: How might this deepen your work as a designer? How might this deepen your work as an actor?

Assessment:

Describe, Analyze, Relate Questions with Side-coaching (During the Lesson)

3	2	1
The student answers the question(s) and offers details and specifics when asked a follow-up question. The student uses personal experiences and prior knowledge to make connections to community and culture in a drama/theatre work.	The student answers the question(s) but lacks details or specifics when asked a follow-up question. The student sometimes uses personal experiences and prior knowledge to make connections to community and culture in a drama/theatre work.	The student cannot answer the question(s). The student does not use personal experiences or prior knowledge to make connections to community or culture in a drama/theatre work.

Teacher Observation of Visual Dramaturgy, Soundscapes, and Tour of a Space (During the Drama)

3	2	1
The student uses their body and voice in a way that is fitting with the given circumstances of the story to deepen, connect, and reflect. The student works individually and collaboratively to build imagery worlds. The student often uses the text as support or as a resource.	The student uses their body and voice, but in a way that does not fit with the given circumstances of the story, or does not deepen, connect, and reflect. The student works individually or collaboratively to build imagery worlds. The student is unclear how to use the text as support or as a resource.	The student does not use their body and voice to respond to the prompt. The student cannot work individually or collaboratively to build imagery worlds. The student does not use the text as support or as a resource.

Summative Assessment:

Picture, Video, or Physical Artifact of Student Work with Individual Reflection After

3	2	1
The student describes the choices that they made with their body/voice or through visual/written text and explains how it connects to the text with details and specifics and connects to other moments in the story. The student is able to compare/contrast student work and identify their own growth opportunities for skill development.	The student describes the choices that they made with their body/voice or through visual/written text and explains how it connects to the text but lacks details or specifics. The student is able to compare/contrast student work and identify their own growth opportunities for skill development but lacks details or specifics.	The student cannot describe the choices that they made with their body/voice or through visual/written text, nor can they explain how it connects to the text. The student is not able to compare/contrast student work or evaluate their own growth opportunities for skill development.

Closing:

As you move forward in your work as a theatre artist in this class, consider the different ways we might build worlds together and that there might be different ideas that fit within the given circumstances of the text. Today we worked to co-construct our understanding around and within the text; diving deep into this work IS the work of a theatre artist.

Learning for all: Please use the space below for suggestions for any specific adaptations or accommodations needed for neuro-diverse or atypical learners.

The lesson makes use of multiple modalities to explore setting, students may find that one strategy worked more comfortably than another for them. At any moment, the teacher can stop and discuss before embodying to ensure student success. The teacher should also make use of side-coaching to support, encourage, and challenge students appropriately (differentiated instruction).

How does this lesson's content model inclusivity and honor diversity?

This lesson uses a play's setting as a point for exploration, considering different interpretations as stemmed from the given circumstances. Students can offer movements and sounds that work for their bodies, while also attending to the physical capabilities of others (ensuring safety and accessibility). The open-ended reflection questions should be answered by getting multiple responses to a question before moving on, thus encouraging dialogic meaning-making (Dawson & Lee, 2018).

Works Cited: N/A

Additional Tools & Resources:

Visual Dramaturgy - <https://dbp.theatredance.utexas.edu/content/visual-dramaturgycollective-drawing>

Soundscapes - <https://dbp.theatredance.utexas.edu/content/soundscapes>

Tour of a Space - <https://dbp.theatredance.utexas.edu/teaching-strategies/tour-space>