

Essential Question

How can we take on a new character?

Enduring Understanding

We can enter characters by performing the actions they do, in the environment they live in.

Skills

Students will be able to:

Respond physically and vocally to external impulses in the world we are creating.

Imagine and create physical spaces for the performance of scenes.

Rehearse scenes in response to side coaching from the teacher/director

Demonstrate listening to feedback through repeated performance

Evaluate their own performances verbally in preparation for rehearsal

Knowledge

Students will know that changes in space and environment concrete will affect actors' performances.

Scenes and characters can be interpreted and performed in a variety of ways.

Activities

1. Game: "Alright/What're You Talkin' About?"

Students, in a circle, pass the energy around by saying "Alright" in an East London accent. Add commands as the game progresses. If the speed, take student suggestions for how to improve the energy of the game. Offer suggestions.

Other commands include:

"What're You Talkin' About" : the energy goes the other way

"Have it" : sends the energy to anyone in the circle

"Take it" : refuses the energy

"Get Out!" : everyone finds a new place

"Fire" : People become fire, touching their toes and standing up

"Bowl of Cherries" : someone has to eat a bowl of cherries

2. Protestors in the Forest

Students "explore" a forest as humans, "finding" different objects. Watch for students growth in making the forest worlds concrete: where is the actors' focus? how intense is the focus? what actions do they do as they imagine different worlds? Are they appropriate for the space?

- tall and short trees

- grass and flowers

- insects

- a dark place in the forest

- a cold place

- a bright place

In creative play, students respond to prompts to act as different characters in a forest. Where necessary, include intentions and objectives in response to the creative play, such as “look for food,” “check this place out,” “escape.”

- kids playing
- adults watching kids
- people chopping down trees
- people keeping trees from being chopped down
- squirrels
- bears
- hummingbirds
- trees

Students form three images as protestors of a city project aimed at chopping down trees—first: gathering and getting ready, second: waiting for the lumberjacks, third: seeing the lumberjack. Responding to the teacher, in role as a lumberjack, the students voice opposition to him. In the improvised dialogue, it is revealed that this is his job, he has a family, an amusement park will be put in in this part of the forest.

Run this drama two or three times, offering ideas about where to stand physically and what actions they might take.

Reflection: Students voice favorite moments from the drama. Explain that actions (like the ones they have done and given examples of) make the jump into character feel more real.

3. Learning and performing text

Students stand in two semi-circles, facing each other. Explain that they will be taking on different characters. Teach them the following short comedic text by having them repeat lines from Rajiv Joseph’s play *Gruesome Playground Injuries**:

A: Why do you have so much blood?

B: Because I fell.

A: Why’d you fall?

B: I rode my bike off the roof.

A: What roof?

B: This roof.

A: The school roof?

B: Yeah.

A: Why?

Once students have these lines memorized, they perform these as groups, adding movements in hands and faces and feet.

Student volunteers then perform these in pairs. After creating the first layout of the scene as an example, invite each pair of performers to create their own scenic space

for the nurse's room. After watching each performance, coach them by providing actions such as:

- cheer her up
- investigate
- make laugh
- keep a secret
- brag
- confess

4. Shout outs and affirmations

Students voice affirmations, moments that moved them from the performances, either what they observed in others or what they remember from their own performance.