

Arts Assessment For Learning

THEATER — 4TH GRADE

ACTION PLAN: PANTOMIME FOR ACTORS

Who (the class or group I will focus on):

Eighteen students from a 4th grade dual language class (English and Spanish)

Inquiry question:

Does self and peer assessment improve students' physicality using Jacques Lecoq's Pantomime for Actors Technique?

Student learning goals:

This strategy will help my students achieve or improve the following learning goals:

- To communicate expressively through the body
- To introduce them to the dynamics of physical theater
- To train their body and learn skills from Jacques Lecoq's Pantomime for Actors Technique
- To not feel in disadvantage in respect to language
- To reflect on pantomime, assess their learning and monitor their progress
- To think of themselves as actors/mimes

Identify indicators from the *Blueprint* aligned with the student learning goals:

Theater Making, ACTING: Performance Skills

Students exercise and refine the actor's instrument through an ongoing exploration of the physical, vocal, characterization and staging components of acting.

Example: Jacques Lecoq's Pantomime for Actors Technique

Theater Making, ACTING: Performance Skills

Students participate in a variety of group and solo activities in rehearsal and performance, demonstrating self-discipline and the ability to work collaboratively.

Example: The Walking Exercise (skill) and The March (physical theater piece)

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Developing Theater Literacy: Responding to Theater Performance

Students practice constructive responses to theater performance using observable evidence to support opinion.

Example: Critiquing an actor's use of the body in a scene

Making Connections through Theater: Connecting Theater to Other Disciplines

Students will extend their understanding of theater by connecting it to learning in other disciplines.

Example: dance and movement

Exploring Careers and Lifelong Learning: Awareness of Careers in Theater

Students will be introduced to the variety of careers in theater, onstage or behind the scenes.

Example: mimes and actors

What formative assessment strategy I will put into practice:

1. SELF-ASSESSMENT: After learning select pantomime exercises, the student actors will use checklists to monitor their progress and identify levels of difficulty or areas of improvement.
2. PEER-ASSESSMENT: On select sessions, and after learning an exercise, the student will assess each other using a performance checklist. In addition, sometimes the class is divided in half to take turns to watch and perform while learning an exercise.
3. TEACHER ASSESSMENT: The teacher will use the same performance checklist to evaluate the student actors.

How and when I plan to implement this assessment strategy in my practice and/or lessons:

This Pantomime for Young Actors course is divided into four units and three phases (exploration and conceptualization, application, and revision). Each unit focuses on teaching and learning pantomime exercises and skills from Jacques Lecoq's Pantomime for Actors Technique.

I grouped the exercises and skills according to either, the level of difficulty (mastery level) or their relevance and relationship to others (skills and exercises). In each unit the

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students have the opportunity to build on prior knowledge, evaluate their performance (revise and reflect), revisit skills, and reach different levels of mastery.

In order to attain the desired result, sometimes the implementation phases will overlap, and in many instances the same exercises will be used. Nevertheless, whenever this occurs I use different formative assessment strategies.

In each session, the warm-up activity is led by a student. There are 35 sessions in total.

Peer Assessment: Students are grouped in pairs to demonstrate either isolated steps of an exercise or the complete exercise to each other.

While Student A performs - Student B observes and completes a checklist, and vice versa. Then, they make observations and recommendations using the *Sharing Protocol* and referring to the steps and rules related to a specific exercise, movement or series of movements from the checklist.

Videotaping select sessions has two purposes: 1) facilitate self-assessment when necessary, students sometimes need to see their own reflection to identify their areas of improvement; 2) facilitate teacher assessment by completing individual checklists. All checklists are in English and Spanish. However, this assessment project focuses on one specific checklist, which can be found in Resources and Students' Work.

Unit 1 introduces the body, movement techniques (isolation, coordination, stretching, bouncing, relaxation/contraction and direction), specific pantomime vocabulary and concepts, basic postures and Jaques Lecoq.

Pantomime Vocabulary: posture, neutral position, V shape, torso/trunk, illusion, rhythm, pattern, repetition, pause, balance, inclination, undulation, rotation, pulling, pushing, fixed point, tension, weight, stretch, relax, travel, head, neck, shoulders, chest, torso/trunk, pelvis, legs, feet and collapse

Other Theater Vocabulary: sequence, full front, full back, profile, right, left, $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, right, left, downstage, upstage, center, acting and improvisation

Unit 2 introduces basic pantomime skills and the first group of Lecoq's exercises, which are presented through different combinations.

The exercises are: The Wall (La pared), The Rope (La soga), The Tower (La torre), Standing and Seated Serpentine Movement (Movimiento de serpentina, sentado y parado), The Trapeze (El trapezio o columpio), The Walking (El caminar), and the Triple Movements of the Head (Movimientos triples de cabeza).

Unit 3 introduces the second group of Lecoq's exercises, also presented through different combinations.

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The exercises are: The Stair (La escalera), Serpentine Inclinations from head to toe (Serie de inclinaciones en serpentina), The Running (El correr), and The Bascule (La báscula).

Unit 4 focuses on applying movement skills and pantomime exercises to act, either solo or with partners, in a non-verbal scene.

The student actors use at least two exercises and apply as many skills as necessary, given their characters' wants and needs, and the demands of the scenes.

There will be three acting rounds: one with partners, and two solo. In the first with-partners-round, the skills and exercises are predetermined and the student actors respond to a narrated scene through improvisation.

In the first solo round the student actors choose at least two exercises to incorporate to their scene. In the second solo and final round, the students' peers propose four exercises of which the student actor can only replace one.

*(In this unit, the student actors are expected to apply what they learned in units two and three, think like actors/mimes, and make choices to perform [create] a pantomime piece. The same student actors will participate in an experimental/physical theater production class the following year, in fifth grade, after receiving a year-long training on Pantomime for Actors, in fourth grade).

Evidence of effectiveness of this assessment strategy:

1. Checklist with performance indicators for select exercises: teacher, peer and self-assessment (units 2-4)
2. Videotaped sessions (select sessions from units 2-4)

I will know my students have met the learning goals when they are able to:

1. Self-assesses their learning and monitor their progress.
2. Offer peer feedback using specific pantomime vocabulary.
3. Reflect on the process of using the body and Lecoq's pantomime technique to act in scenes (solo and with partners).