



Drama Strategy: **Tableau**

Tableau

Definition: A tableau is a frozen picture. When we use tableau in drama, students demonstrate their understanding in a physical and non-verbal way. When students express their understanding of an emotion, a concept, a character’s point of view, in a non-verbal way, instruction is differentiated and ALL learners engage critically with the content. For early learners, students create tableau images as a spontaneous response to a question or prompt. Tableau with early learners is best used for students to explore expression using their faces, and shape or scale using their bodies.

Why might I use tableau with my students?

<p>Requires students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be active • Demonstrate their understanding and communicate their interpretations non-verbally • Experiment with and explore concepts kinesthetically • Engage their creativity 	<p>Helps students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visualize vocabulary • Represent characters or physical objects in space • Activate details of a text or textual experience • Make observations of their peers and interpret others’ creative expressions • Support their social/emotional development
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**adapted from Jeffrey Wilhelm and Augusto Boal*

Tips for successful tableau instruction in your classroom

When should I use tableau?

- Consider whether tableau will introduce, teach, explore, assess, or review content with your students.
- Think about how you will use tableau to activate your students’ prior knowledge - will you need to introduce vocabulary, images, or concepts ahead of time?
- Does the learning goal invite students to either express emotion with their faces or explore shape/scale/character with their bodies? For example: tableau is an effective strategy to explore the learning goal of comparing “big” and “little” people,

places, or things. For early learners, it might not be as effective when exploring learning goals that relate to motion, abstract concepts, or anything that requires verbal responses from students.

How do I successfully facilitate tableau?

- Tableau images can either be on a macro or micro scale.
- For early learners, begin with micro images - frozen facial expressions. *Can you show me with your face how you feel when you step in something sticky?*
- Once students have conquered tableau on a micro level, invite them to stand and use their entire bodies or create larger (macro) images. *Can you freeze in a picture of an enormous elephant swinging its large trunk?*
- Offer students clear expectations about what a frozen or still picture might look like. Provide examples and remind students that a tableau might be held for a longer period of time for others' to observe.
- Teach a clear structure student participation in tableau images. For example, a countdown, turning off the lights, or a sound cue (a bell) to let them know when to freeze. *In a moment, I am going to ask you to create a tableau or frozen picture of a scared mouse, remember, when I count down from 3, you will freeze. Let's try it together, 3, 2, 1, FREEZE!*
- For early learners, place tableau in an imaginary context - are they on a photo safari, bringing a photo album to life, or looking at an imaginary or real mirror?

How do I take tableau to the next level?

- Tableau is another great strategy for students to learn how to read expressions and interpret others' performances. Whether the student is reading or interpreting teacher tableau images or their peers' performances, there are rich opportunities for social emotional development.
- Take time to reflect on the images through questioning, observation, and reflection.
- Ask your students variations on these questions as they observe a peers' tableau: *What do you see? What else do you see? What does that mean? How do you know? Have you ever seen that before?*