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Inspiration: Tableau is an actor's tool that can reveal complex character relationships onstage with just bodies in space. I want to use tableau to help my English students understand how the author's word choices express/define characterization and types of conflict in a play (in this case, <i>The Crucible</i>).		
Title: Using Tableau to Explore Word Choice, Characterization, and Staging in <i>The Crucible</i>		
Subject Area & Grade Level: Honors English 11		

I. OVERVIEW OF THE LESSON

Summary: Students will work in groups and use proximity to decide where characters will be placed in a "frozen picture" on the stage to help them understand the nuances in characterization between the characters in Act I of *The Crucible*. Ultimately, the tableau will be performed for the class.

Standards: [Ohio English Language Arts Standards 2012](#)

- RL.11-12.3 - Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

Objectives/Outcomes: Students will demonstrate mastery of understanding how the author's word choices develop characterization and types of conflict.

Teaching Approach(es): Guided group physical activity, question sheet and reflection

Assessment Tool(s): Direct observation of participation, completed performance reflections, exit slip

II. LESSON PREPARATION

Teacher Needs

- ❖ **Teacher Context & Research:** Rosenblatt's transactional theory signifies that both the reader and the text play important roles in the formation of meaning.
- ❖ **Helpful Hints:** Have notes listing the types of characterization on the board.

Student Needs

- ❖ **Prior Knowledge:** Characters in Act I of *The Crucible*

- ❖ **Student Voice:** Students stage a scene and decide where to place their characters.
- ❖ **Vocabulary:** proximity, tableau, direct and indirect characterization, upstage, downstage

III. EVIDENCE OF OUTCOMES

Students will refine their knowledge of conflict and characterization through staging a scene from *The Crucible* using tableau.

IV. ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

Students will understand that physical interpretation of the placement of characters and their stance in a play communicates non-verbally about their characterization and the type of conflict that they are facing (internal, external, etc.).

V. LEARNING PLAN

Teaching Inquiry Question: How can tableau help students understand the characters in *The Crucible*?

Essential Question: How can comparing and contrasting characters' placement on stage help students better understand their different character traits?

Resources/Materials:

- Class set of *The Crucible*
- Notecards for drawing groups
- Whiteboard, marker
- Handout of teacher-selected scenes from the novel
- [Tableau Performance Reflection Sheet](#)

Hook: Students will pick a “secret witch.” Then, as a class the students will move around the room so that they always keep a friend between themselves and their witch. Afterwards in class discussion, students will reflect on how creating *proximity* demonstrates a relationship (friend/enemy).

Main Lesson Narrative/Sequence:

Introduction: We have just finished reading Act I of *The Crucible* and will be examining how the physical proximity of characters in a specific scene reflects how that character is characterized and the conflict they are facing based on the author's word choices. Students will be asked to think about their proximity in the hook activity to both their friend and enemy.

Teacher Modeling: The teacher will model a scene from Act I of *The Crucible* by placing students as John Proctor and Abigail in a tableau based on the example quote below. Explain why each character was placed in their certain spot to demonstrate how they were characterized based on the author's word choices. Give out the handout featuring the line from the play that is being portrayed and model a close

read of the text using literary terms. Ask the students to evaluate the tableau as a faithful interpretation of the text.

- Example quote using John Proctor’s dialogue:

“Abby, I may think of you softly from time to time. But I will cut off my hand before I’ll ever reach for you again. Wipe it out of mind. We never touched, Abby.” (Miller 1.15)

- Possible Close Read Response:

The quotation **characterizes John Proctor as a moral person, even though he has committed adultery**. He regrets his sexual affair with Abigail and is determined to leave it in the past and even deny that it happened because of the shame he feels about the sin. Recalling her fondly suggests that he did have affection for her then and may still long for her sometimes, so the affair was more than just physical on his part. Clearly **Proctor has internal conflict about having violated both a biblical commandment and his marriage vow by yielding to sin. The quotation intimates the depth of his self-loathing. Yet, we hear personal conviction and decisiveness** when he says, “I will cut off my hand before I read for you again” (Miller 1.15). He will not resume their relationship.

Peer Guided Practice: Students will draw group numbers from a hat and be split into groups of three. Each group will stage a different scene using tableau focused on proximity as a technique. The placement of characters and their stance should reflect how that character is characterized in the play and the type of conflict they are facing (internal, external, etc.). Once the students have had time to create their tableau in their individual groups, they will perform it for the class. At the end of each group's performance, the students will explain their reasonings on character placement and pose.

Individual Application: Students will take individual notes on each group's performance and complete a reflection sheet after the activity. (In following lessons, the culminating project for *The Crucible* will consist of students creating a poster and a written assignment based on the standards explored in today's lesson.)

Demonstration of Learning: Successful participation in the group activity, filling out the questions, and ultimately, demonstrating mastery by scoring 85% or higher on a culminating unit project.

[Tableau Performance Reflection](#)

Final Review: Teacher evaluation of the tableau, corresponding documents, and culminating project

VI. LESSON REFLECTION

Students should complete questions during and after the performance and turn it in before they leave.

ARTIFACTS OF LEARNING

[Lesson Photos](#)



Name _____ Period _____ Date _____

Directions: Answer the questions below as the other groups perform their tableau.

Tableau Performance

Pre-Performance Questions

1. Who are the characters in your assigned scene from *The Crucible*?
2. What character are you playing?
3. List one line from the scene that directly characterizes one of the characters in the scene.

Group 1 Members (Please list names):

1. What scene from Act 1 of *The Crucible* is the group staging?
2. What stood out to you? What did you notice about the placement of individuals?
3. What was a conflict that one of the characters in the scene was facing? Was it internal or external? All of the types of conflict are listed on the board.



Group 2 Members (Please list names):

4. What scene from Act 1 of The Crucible is the group staging?

5. What stood out to you? What did you notice about the placement of individuals?

6. What was a conflict that one of the characters in the scene was facing? Was it internal or external? All of the types of conflict are listed on the board.

Group 3 Members (Please list names):

7. What scene from Act 1 of The Crucible is the group staging?

8. What stood out to you? What did you notice about the placement of individuals?

9. What was a conflict that one of the characters in the scene was facing? Was it internal or external? All of the types of conflict are listed on the board.

Post-Performance Questions

10. How did the use of Tableau assist you in understanding characters in The Crucible.