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Inspiration: Tableau is an actor's tool that can reveal complex textual content onstage with just bodies in space. I want to use tableau to help my theatre students understand the characters and story of a difficult text (in this case, Shakespeare).		
Title: Textual Clues and Content through Tableau		
Subject Area & Grade Level: English/Theatre, 9-12		

I. OVERVIEW OF THE LESSON

Summary: This lesson will take an unfamiliar script and ask students to develop meaning within it through three experiences, as an individual, as a small group, and as a whole class. Through their reactions and interactions students will discover meanings in the script together and will have time to reflect on their work to make larger connections. The script used for the initial teaching of this lesson will be from William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Standards: [Ohio Drama-Theatre Standards 2012](#)

- 1CE - Discuss the artistic choices a playwright makes in a dramatic work and how these influence the interpretation and message of the work.
- 1PR - Manipulate vocal qualities, posture, movement and language to express variety in characters and situations.
- 7PR - Integrate other art forms into a dramatic presentation.
- 2PR - Demonstrate the collaborative skills necessary for producing a scene with an ensemble.
- 1RE - Explain how a performance style communicates a message or story narrative.
- 1CE - Examine and explain the use of various theatrical styles to achieve an intended purpose and meaning.

Objectives/Outcomes:

Students will use their experience to bring understanding to an unfamiliar text.

Students will work independently to connect with and communicate meaning.

Students will evaluate their understanding and make improvements before demonstrating to others.

Students will work with a small group of peers to evaluate and bring meaning to an unfamiliar text.

Students will work with their peers to communicate their understanding of a text.

Students will collaborate with peers to interpret other groups' performances.

Students will work as a class to create a tableau that adds meaning to an unfamiliar text.

Students will apply their theatrical knowledge to a visual representation of a text.

Students will comment on what they see in performance and how it enhances their understanding of a text.

Students will apply prior knowledge of William Shakespeare and his play in understanding an unfamiliar script.

Teaching Approach(es): individual demonstration, small group collaboration, large group collaboration, large group performance with on-the-spot comment and evaluation, improvisation

Assessment Tool(s): Peer response and feedback, written comment and reflection, memorization and performance assessed by rubric

II. LESSON PREPARATION

Teacher Needs

- ❖ Teacher Context & Research:
 - o The Folger Method, Performance Based Learning, <https://www.folger.edu/the-folger-method>
 - o [A Midsummer Night's Dream online version](#), Folger Shakespeare Library
- ❖ Helpful Hints:
 - o Performance Based Learning is a great way to encourage students to wrestle with a text either alone or in pairs or groups to apply a meaning that helps them better understand a text. It's okay if the teacher is experiencing the discoveries as the students do.
 - o This lesson is cumulative and each activity builds on the last. They can be organized in one class period or time can be given over 2-3 class periods for students to work, react, and discuss more.
 - o The main role of the teacher is to be the learning coach, supporting students' ideas, encouraging their discoveries, and helping them to make connections.

Student Needs

- ❖ Prior Knowledge: Most students by the 9th grade will have read 1-2 plays in class. They will be familiar with empathy, gesture, and the use of facial expression to communicate meaning. Even with a more difficult text, like the Shakespearian one used in this example, students will

connect to it more than they expect as the activities build on each other. Having a peer group to listen to and work with together will aid in their understanding and comprehension.

- ❖ Student Voice: Student voice will be prominent in this lesson. Beyond the three activities, students will spend time reflecting and memorizing on their own, but their voice can still emerge as they share their interpretation of the whole class tableau and of course when they perform the monologue for each other.
- ❖ Vocabulary: aria, monologue vs. soliloquy, tableau

III. EVIDENCE OF OUTCOMES

Beyond the interactions with students during the initial three activities, students will demonstrate their learning in their written reflection following the lesson and the emotion and emotive choices made when memorizing and performing the monologue for their peers.

IV. ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

- I can use my own experience to bring meaning to an unfamiliar work.
- I can interpret meaning from what I see.
- I can divulge meaning and make connections through looking at smaller parts of a text.
- I can use my prior vocabulary knowledge to make connections to an unfamiliar text.
- I can use peer feedback to improve my interpretation and understanding.
- I can improve my interpretation of a text by looking at it in different ways.
- My performance of a script will improve the more I know and understand the language within it.

V. LEARNING PLAN

Teaching Inquiry Question: How can cumulative work with a text through tableau improve students' understanding and interpretation of an unfamiliar text?

Essential Question: How can prior knowledge and empathy lead students to a greater understanding of an unfamiliar text?

Resources/Materials:

- Numerous copies of [the chosen script](#)
 - cut into strips, for the opening solo activity
 - cut into chunks, for the small group activity
 - full copies, for the whole class activity
- [Theatre Notebook prompt handout](#)
- Pencils
- iPad/screen on which to display images

Hook: Who is familiar with (insert name of text used)? What do you know of (text used)? Who are the characters? What is the plot?

Main Lesson Narrative/Sequence:

Following a brief warm up, students will be given single lines from Titania’s speech, Act 2, Scene 1, lines 121-137. Students will be asked to read the line and choose a word that stands out to them (for its action, description, or meaning) and that they could demonstrate through gesture within the large group circle. As a class students will guess what the scene is about from the words shared and demonstrated to the group. Questions posed could include: What events seem to be happening in the play? What emotions does this character seem to be dealing with? What can you assume about Shakespeare’s word choices?

Following the opening exercise, students will be divided into three groups and given a number of lines from the same speech (5 lines, 6 lines, and 6 lines). In their small group, students should be given five minutes to discuss their lines and to plan a tableau inspired by their given lines. Each group will take a turn displaying their tableau while classmates take a gallery walk, sharing aloud to the class what they see, feel, and can assume from their peers’ work.

Students will then be given the full set of lines from Titania’s speech and given 10 minutes to discuss the excerpt and plan a tableau that includes the entire class. Teacher will take a photo of the group tableau and display it on a screen/Smartboard for students to view as they return to their desks in class. Students will sit and write what they see displayed in the tableau before discussing it aloud in class. Students should be encouraged to write about emotions, actions, and plot points they see displayed in the tableau.

Demonstration of Learning:

Before the conclusion of class, students will be given the following Theatre Notebook prompt to respond to and discuss at the opening of the next class: What effect does Titania’s speech at the start of Act II have on the course of the play? Cite three lines/words and discuss the impact of this line on the characters/play.

Final Review:

Students will be assigned to memorize this speech to memorize and deliver in class. In the delivery of the monologue students will demonstrate their personal connections with the scene, the character’s emotional state, and the story at play. Their dramatic interpretation will portray the understanding they’ve applied to the play and the story.

[Titania Monologue Self Evaluation](#)

VI. LESSON REFLECTION

Once students have performed their monologues, look at the scenes prior to and following the chosen speech. Explore what leads up to the scene and what follows it. Allow students to gauge their interpretation of the character by the other discoveries they make. Also look at another scene with the

character later in the play to allow them to see consistencies and how the character is portrayed in other situations. How does their interpretation fit within these new discoveries?

ARTIFACTS OF LEARNING

[Lesson Photo #1](#)

[Lesson Photo #2](#)

[Lesson Photo #3](#)

[Lesson Photo #4](#)

[Samples of student work](#)

Act 2, Scene 1, Lines 121b-137

Titania

Set your heart at rest,	121
The fairyland buys not the child of me.	122
His mother was a vot'ress of my order,	123
And in the spicèd Indian air by night	124
Full often hath she gossiped by my side;	125
And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,	126
Marking th'embarkèd traders on the flood,	127
When we have laughed to see the sails conceive	128
And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind,	129
Which she – with pretty and with swimming gait	130
Following, — her womb then rich with my young squire —	131
Would imitate and sail upon the land	132
To fetch me trifles, and return again	133
As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.	134
But she, being mortal, of that boy did die	135
And for her sake do I rear up her boy;	136
And for her sake I will not part with him.	13



Theatre Notebook Prompt

Following the exercises in class and what you now know of Titania's speech from Act 2, Scene 1, Lines 121b-137, what effect do you think her speech has on the course of the play? What do you think fueled this response from her? Cite three lines/words from the play and discuss the impact of this line/word(s) on the characters/play.



Name _____

Titania’s Speech (A Midsummer Night’s Dream) Self Evaluation

1- Needs Much Improvement	2-Needs Improvement	3-Average	4-Above Average	5-Outstanding
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Using the 1-5 scale above, rank the following related to your performance of the monologue:

I spoke the lines with the emotional intent that my character would _____

I allowed the desires and emotions of my character to motivate me _____

I sought to build a connection with the audience that they could see and feel _____

I was believable/convincing in my portrayal of the character _____

My overall performance rank _____

For another 25 points write about the following things: how you prepared for the monologue, how you think you did in your performance, and what you learned about yourself and performance. The more details you give in your answer, the higher the grade you will get on this assignment. If you give me the ordinary list of things you think that might impress me (I learned my lines, I said my lines, I performed) your grade will be quite ordinary. Please give proper attention to the rules of good writing. You may use the back of this sheet or another piece of paper if needed.