

Elk Grove Unified School District
Visual and Performing Arts Resources
Theatre

Grade 4: Lesson 2

Title: Motivation and Objective

Standards Addressed

Artistic Perception

Processing, Analyzing, and Responding to Sensory Information Through the Language and Skills Unique to Theatre

- 1.1 Use the vocabulary of theatre to describe theatrical experiences, such as *plot, conflict, climax, resolution, tone, objectives, motivation, and stock characters*.
- 1.2 Identify a character's objectives and motivations to explain that character's behavior.

Creative Expression

Creating, Performing, and Participating in Theatre

- 2.1 Demonstrate the emotional traits of a character through gesture and action.

Aesthetic Valuing

Responding to, Analyzing, and Critiquing Theatrical Experiences

- 4.1 Develop and apply appropriate criteria or rubrics to critique performances as to characterization, diction, pacing, gesture, and movement.

Time: 50 minutes

Floor Plan: Classroom with a performance area.

Materials Needed:

- Two or three chairs

Purpose:

To introduce the students to how actors use motivation and objective and to allow them to practice these skills.

Background:

The behavior of an actor on stage, whether in a scripted play or in an improvisation, should never be arbitrary. An actor must work with the director to develop a *motivation*, or the reason the character is behaving as he/she is. A character's motivation determines the character's goals or *objectives* or what the character wants. These elements of *method acting* were pioneered by Russian actor Konstantin Stanislavsky (1868-1938).

Key Questions:

How do actors use motivation and objective?

Vocabulary:

- * *Character*—the role played by an actor as he/she assumes another’s identity (physically, mentally, and emotionally).
- * *Motivation*—the psychological reason for a character’s action(s).
- * *Objective*—a character’s goal or intention.

<u>Steps of the Lesson</u>	<u>Thoughts for the Teacher</u>
1 Set up purpose/goals In theatre, what is a motivation and what is an objective?	How are you making your purpose clear to the students? Theatre Games will be modeled until all the students are able to participate.
2 Engage students The students will become engaged by performing and viewing motivation (park bench).	How can I effectively get the students interested in the content of the lesson? Teacher will model each activity prior to the students beginning.
3 Learning Sequence See actual lesson sequence below.	What are the BIG idea(s) of your presentation? How will students understand/experience the material that you present? The purpose of this lesson is to have the students practice the acting skills of objective and motivation. Students participate in an activity which allows first hand experience with these skills.
4 Assessment Either motivation (park bench) or objective (Complaint Department), or both.	How will you allow your students to deepen their understanding of content presented? (Reflect, revise, retell, refine, practice) Students will practice objective and motive in theatre games.

Actual Lesson Sequence

1. **Motivation—Park Bench.** Explain to the students that they will be doing an activity that will allow them to practice the acting technique of motivation. A character’s behavior on stage is determined by their motivation or why they are doing something. This is a technique that helps make an actor’s performance believable.
2. Set up two or three chairs in the front of the room to resemble a park bench. Explain to the students that people go to park benches for reasons. To relax, read, wait for friends, watch basketball, walk the dog, sit with a baby, watch the landing space ship, etc. All props are pantomimed. Tell each student to think of a reason to go to the bench. Give them a few seconds, then start.
3. The first student will go to the bench and sit on one side. He/she should bring his/her motivation (pantomime props) with the him/her. The audience should be able to tell what he/she is doing. Then a second student joins the first student on the bench. They should have an improvisational dialogue. Then, the first student on the bench finds a motivation to leave. For example, Mom calls, friends arrive, finishes book, time for dinner, etc. The second student moves over on the bench and the third student comes to the bench and the procedure is repeated. When they finish, the second student finds a motivation to leave and the third person moves over. The fourth student then comes to the bench. This is repeated until all the students have had an opportunity.

4. **Objective—Complaint Department.** Explain to the students that they will be doing an activity that will allow them to practice the acting technique of objective. A character’s behavior on stage is determined by their objectives or what they want. This is a technique that helps make an actor’s performance believable.
5. The first student will play *Customer Service*. Their objective is, while appearing to be doing a job, they do not give refunds, credits, or exchanges. They must keep their objective to not give good customer service in mind at all times.
6. The second student will play the *Customer*. The customer is returning an item. It is an imaginary, pantomimed item. It may be as simple as a pen or a giant green T-Rex. The customer wants a refund, credit, or an exchange.
7. As the game continues, the characters must keep trying to obtain their objective. When the improvisational scene has gone on for a while, the teacher should call “resolve” and one of the characters then must give up their objective. After the situation is reached, the person who had been Customer Service rotates back to his/her seat and the person who had been the Customer rotates to the role of Customer Service. Then another student takes on the role of the Customer and approaches Customer Service with a new item. Continue until all the students have had an opportunity to practice the objective.

Assessment:

Advanced: Student volunteers, makes good eye contact, and demonstrates creative use of movement, projection, diction, and articulation. Character’s objective or motivation is clearly communicated and executed with a high level of focus and commitment.

Proficient: Student is ready to go when called on, makes adequate eye contact, and makes good use of movement, projection, diction, and articulation. Character’s objective or motivation is clearly communicated and executed with an adequate skill level.

Approaching: Student needs encouragement or looks unwilling when called on, avoids eye contact, and makes little use of movement. The audience may be unable to hear or understand the actor. Character’s objective or motivation is unclear.

Other Considerations:

- The clearer the actor’s objective or motivation, the more successful the student will be in these activities.

Possible Extensions:

- The settings of the game are changed. For example, a bus stop or shopping mall are also good locations.

Sources:

Harmon, Renee, Teaching a Young Actor, New York, Walker and Company, 1994. ISBN #0-8027-7423-7.

Spolin, Viola, Theatre Games for the Classroom—A Teacher’s Handbook, Evanston, Illinois, Northwestern University Press, 1986. ISBN #0-8101-4004-7.