

Tableau

DESCRIPTION: A tableau is a frozen image containing two or more people that portrays an idea, theme, or specific parts of a story.

SET UP: Tableau is usually created in a small group. Groups can create and perform tableaux simultaneously, sequentially, or in a presentational style. Groups can be assigned the same idea or event to portray in tableaux or each group can be assigned a different idea or part of a text or story.

MATERIALS: percussive instrument

SAMPLE PROCEDURE:

- 1) Divide class into small groups of 4 to 6 students.
- 2) Assign groups a particular event or idea that they will portray through a group tableau.
- 3) Allow students a short time (30 seconds) to pick parts and decide what they each will do.
- 4) Prompt groups to focus on you. Explain that the groups will practice their tableau simultaneously on your cue. Ask students to stand in neutral (hands at side, facing front). Explain that they have 5 counts to get into their tableau and freeze. “Ready, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, Tableau/Freeze.”
- 5) As students freeze in their tableaux, provide feedback about is seen e.g., levels, expression, shapes. Suggest possible choices that they can make to improve their work.
- 6) Release students from the tableaux. Give them time (15-20 seconds) to revise their work.
- 7) Prompt students to freeze in their tableaux again. Ask them to use the criteria to assess the quality of their tableaux.
- 8) Have the groups individually share their tableau.
- 9) Discuss the criteria observed and the success of communicating the idea or event portrayed. Ask for suggestions for improvement.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

- **Freeze:** Students freeze with complete commitment to the image.
- **Body:** Students use face and body in a variety of shapes, parts of the body, and implied energies.
- **Focus:** Students’ eyes are focused on a particular activity or relationship.
- **Space:** Tableau incorporates a variety of high, middle, and low levels.
- **Expression:** Tableau clearly communicates a main idea or intent.

SAMPLE REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS:

What levels do you see? What do you think this character is feeling? How could you tell? Is it clear what is happening? Why? What would you title this tableau?