

# Theatre Arts Lesson Plan

**Artist Name:** Gary Draper  
**Art Form:** Theater Arts  
**Grade Level(s):** 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> (Special Day Class: High functioning learning disabled students)

**Class Objective:** Students will gain an understanding of Focus and Concentration

## HOME SPACE

### Exercise #1

- Have students form into a circle by the count of 10. Replay if count runs over 10; stress importance of finding a spot in circle and taking it without distractions or without changing one's mind, or by interacting with others, etc.
- In circle begin body-part warm up by shaking and stopping and "freezing" abruptly, as quickly as possible. Stress: point of concentration is keeping eyes and attention on artist while listening to his/her voice. Play with slowing down and speeding up body-part routine. End body-part routine by asking students to combine all body parts into a vigorous body shake; alternate high energy shake with freeze. Stress responding to commands and drum cue as fast as possible.
- Sitting on floor, still in circle, have students do spider routine with hands as spiders; again, have students focus, and imitate artist's spider actions as they travel down to the feet, then run in fear from feet, walk up chest, step on lips, flatten nose, climb to top of head, and waive by-by, before jumping off and gliding down on a single strand of silk, etc. Embellish as needed; add humor, tension and suspense whenever possible; work to keep student eyes glued to actions; keep them engaged with suspense as to what the crazy spiders will do next.

## DANCE SPACE

### Exercise #2

#### Physical Warm-up

- Run and freeze routine, using body shapes, traveling movements, tempo changes, suspenseful quiet movements, etc. Engage them with voice, sudden shifts in energy; be watchful not to overexcite students; bring energy down when needed.
- Continuing R&F with Simon says routine, eliminating students who are tricked by responding to a command without drum cue. Stress point of concentration is to hear command followed by drum cue before responding. Play up feeling and tension of competition: "It's me against all of you. I'm going to do everything I can to trick you. Don't be fooled or tricked by me. Focus. Concentrate."

## THEATRE SPACE

### Exercise #3

- Replay R&F routines with select students that clearly demonstrate what focus and concentration looks like when applied to shapes and movements. Demonstrate tension and stillness in shapes by physically moving a student from one location to another, while the student maintains his/her rigid, tense shape.

### Reflection

- What is Student A doing while she's focused and frozen in a shape?
- Can you see or feel the tension in Student B's shape? Where do you see the tension most? Fingers? Etc.
- What is Student C's point of concentration as she's frozen in the strange and beautiful shape? What is she thinking about? Can you tell? Can you tell by looking at her?
- Does it look like Student D is being chased by something or someone while he's running? Does he want to get away? Why is he slowing down to look behind? Why doesn't he just run to get away, instead of slowing down?

### Exercise #4

Set-up:

- Let's make up a dance of anxiety. Who knows what anxiety is? Explain: it's nerves, tension, fear, a knotting stomach; If needed, demonstrate a dance of anxiety. Have Student A start in a neutral stance, before exploding into a high energy dance of nerves, with body ticks, jerks, and spasms, while artist drums a driving beat or plays appropriate driving, frenetic music.

Time permitting, repeat dance with individual students, and for variation, have students become stomach of a very anxious individual.

### Reflection

- Did you see what her arms and legs were doing?
- Was that high or low anxiety?
- What did that stomach look like? Was it twisting and knotting? Did it look like it was about to vomit, to throw up and spray food out of the mouth?

## HOME SPACE

### Exercise #5

Do quiet down exercise, before ending class. In circle, have individual students say their name, count the number of syllables in their name, and beat them out on the drum.

Have them stand and bow and clap to end class. For next 4 to 5 classes play out same lesson plan structure while adding variations to the activities.