Blue Man Lesson Lab

The Comedian, The Zoologist, and The Hero

Modern Times

Elementary School

Applying the Blue Man Creative Impulses

The Blue Man finds humor in nooks and crannies. Asking questions with eyes. Tossing a marshmallow. Eating Cap'n Crunch. The Blue Man is funny. He shifts, invites, plays, jokes, and cajoles. Much like Charlie Chaplin, the Blue Man applies physical tactics to bounce musically toward desired ends, bringing the audience along as a full partner in the comical journey. In this lesson, learners will be given the opportunity to find humor in everyday situations by creating scenes where simplicity can inspire laughter.

Lesson Summary

Introduce the lesson by asking learners to watch four short video clips.

Blue Man Group "Feast"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HubV2-QJA40

Charlie Chaplin "Modern Times Coffee Drinking"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1mYtNMDFyXQ

Blue Man Group "Breakfast Symphony"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c816_ZK_Q8I

Charlie Chaplin "The Lion's Cage"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79i84xYelZI

Ask learners to consider the following questions while watching the video clips: Did the video clips tell a story? Did the story have a beginning, middle, and end? What was the main action in the story? Describe the characters in the story? Did the characters have a problem to solve? Did the characters want something?

After viewing the video clips, discuss the answers to the questions aloud.

Continue the lesson by dividing the class into groups of 3-5 learners. Ask learners to appoint the following roles: a Leader who is responsible for making sure all group members participate; a Timekeeper who makes sure the group is aware of how

much time the group has to complete the task at hand; a Scribe who records group ideas; all learners will be Presenters.

Assign groups the task of creating a 3-5 minute scene that will be performed for the large group. Each group will need to develop one scene. In developing their scene, the groups will need to write scene summaries, character sketches, and setting descriptions. No words will be used in the scenes. Communication will take place non-verbally.

Choosing a scene is the next task in the lesson. Write the name of possible scenes on large index cards. Possible scenes might include a birthday party, Christmas morning, a dentist appointment, the first day of school, the last day of school, a trip on a plane, a visit to the zoo, a visit to a museum, a visit to a beach, or a visit to grandmas, for example. Ask groups to choose a large index card. The scene on the card will be the one the group develops.

Once scenes have been chosen, learners will need to write basic scene summaries that outline the beginning, middle, and end of each scene. The scene summaries will also need to include the central conflict of the scene and how that conflict gets resolved. Learners might need some specific help on writing scene summaries. Scene cards might suggest a specific conflict. For example, the card on which the Christmas morning scene is presented might explain that the present the central character has been given has been taped so tightly that it can't be opened. The beach scene card might indicate that while swimming a shark is spotted. Each scene card might present a conflict, and each scene summary will need to explain how the conflict is resolved.

Ask groups to complete character sketches for each character in the scene. Each group member will need to portray a character. Character sketches need to include the character name and age. Character sketches might also describe where the character was born, the character's career, and the character's family status, for example. Encourage learners to provide as much detail as possible.

Learners will also need to complete a setting description for their scenes. Setting descriptions will need to detail where and when the scene is occurring. For example, describe the room in the house where presents are being opened on Christmas morning. Encourage learners to provide as much detail as possible.

Once learners have created scene summaries, character sketches, and setting descriptions, they can begin to rehearse their scene performances. After groups have rehearsed, they can perform their scenes for the large group.

All scenes will be evaluated on creativity, completeness, and attention to detail.

Connecting to Standards

- Reading Standards for Literature K-5-Key Ideas and Details, Craft and Structure, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity
- Writing Standards K-5-Texts Types and Purposes
- College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards K-5 for Speaking and Listening, Comprehension and Collaboration, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas
- College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards K-5 for Language, Knowledge of Language, Presentation of Vocabulary Acquisition and Use
- Language Standards K-5 Knowledge of Language, Vocabulary Acquisition and Use, Conventions of Standard English,

Rods And Cones

Middle School

Applying the Blue Man Creative Impulses

The Blue Man highlights the rods and cones of the human eye in the context of their show. A video clip about the human eye focused on the information processing capacity of rods and cones brings audience members along a journey of wonder and understanding. The Blue Man's interest in rods and cones stems from innate curiosity. The Blue Man desires to make sense of the natural world. Human eyes make question asking, sense making, learning, and greater understanding possible. This lesson will extend the reference to the organic system of rods and cones across the breadth of animal species.

Lesson Summary

Begin this lesson by showing the video "How Animals See The World." https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XbZ9xJUyIWY

After the video, ask learners to consider the following questions: Do different animal species have different eye physiology? What is the role of the eye in information processing? Do rods and cones function differently in different animals? What are specific advantages and disadvantages of differences in eye physiology across animal species?

Continue the lesson by asking learners to see themselves as accomplished zoologists. They are preparing for a World Animal Eye Summit. The Summit will be an opportunity for zoologists who study the eyes of a variety of animal species to convene and share information.

Continue the lesson by dividing the class into groups of 3-5 learners. Ask learners to appoint the following roles: a Leader who is responsible for making sure all group

members participate; a Timekeeper who makes sure the group is aware of how much time the group has to complete the task at hand; and a Scribe who records group ideas. All group members will perform the roles of Researchers responsible for gathering information, and Presenters who will share information at the Summit.

Each group will choose an animal to study. Group Leaders can choose animals randomly from animal names written on cards. Animals to consider can include: cat, fly, frog, rhinoceros, butterfly, snake, owl, chameleon, squid, clam, goat, hammerhead shark, hippopotamus, spider, octopus, starfish, and tarsier.

Each group will be required to develop one 7-10 minute presentation for the Summit. Presentations will focus on the basic physiology of the animal eye; describe eye functions with particular attention to the eye's role in information processing; and address the advantages and disadvantages of the particular animal eye. Presentations can be created using PowerPoint or similar software program. Presentations can necessarily include video and digital images.

Presentations will be evaluated on creativity, accuracy, completeness, and attention to detail.

During the Summit, ask learners to take notes on the presentations using the following guiding questions: What is the general role of the eye in information processing? What similarities and differences exist between each animal's eye? What advantages and disadvantages exist for each eye?

Following the presentations, discuss answers to the guiding questions.

Connecting to Standards
- College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading K-12 Key Ideas and Details, Craft and Structure, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity
- Reading Standards for Literature K-12 Key Ideas and Details, Craft and Structure, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity
- Writing Standards 6-12 Text Types and Purposes, Research to Build and Present Knowledge, Range of Writing
- College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading 6-12 Conventions of Standard English, Knowledge of Language, Vocabulary Acquisition and Use
- Language Standards 6-12 Conventions of Standard English, Knowledge of Language, Vocabulary Acquisition and Use
- Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12 Key Ideas and Details, Craft and Structure, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

Animating Heroes

High School

Applying The Blue Man Creative Impulses

The Blue Man's journey can be understood as a universal tale of connection. The Blue Man connects through music. The Blue Man connects through laughter. The Blue Man connects through technology. Connecting with the world is central to the Blue Man quest. Similarly, tales connect cultures within our world. Tales of heroes connect cultures. This lesson seeks to connect cultures by looking deeply into the Hero's Journey.

Lesson Summary

Begin the lesson by viewing a scene from Star Wars. The basic frame of Joseph Campbell's concept of the Hero's Journey (http://www.mythologyteacher.com/The-Hero's-Journey.php) can be used as a guide for discussion. (Both a general discussion of the Hero's Journey and the Star Wars example can be found within that resource.) The introduction to the Hero's Journey should include a discussion of the fact that the common elements of the Hero's Journey occur across cultures, involve similar "stages," and occur across many ages, times and contexts.

Once the concept of the Hero's Journey is introduced, continue the lesson by dividing the class into groups of 3-5 learners. Ask learners to appoint the following roles: a Leader who is responsible for making sure all group members participate; a Timekeeper who makes sure the group is aware of how much time the group has to complete the task at hand; a Scribe who records group ideas, a Reporter who can share group progress with the larger group.

Ask each group to choose a hero to study. Groups can choose heroes from hero names written on cards. Heroes to consider can include: Buddha, Jason, Gilgamesh, Herakles, Joan of Arc, Dorothy from the *Wizard of Oz*, Harry Potter, and Odysseus. Highlighting a variety of heroes will allow learners an opportunity to gain a broader understanding of the Hero's Journey concept.

Once learners have chosen a hero on whom to focus, let learners know they will be creating a 2-3 minute Claymation video version of their Hero's Journey.

The first step in the creating the video is developing a character outline for each hero. Character outlines will include all available details about the hero. Character outlines will necessarily include the: who, what, when, where, and why of the hero. Character outlines will vary greatly depending upon the hero of focus.

Ask each group to complete a character outline.

The second step in creating the video is developing a plot outline for each hero. Plot outlines will necessarily include the main stages of the Hero's Journey. (Refer to Hero's Journey resources listed above as a guide to determining main points of journey on which to focus.)

Ask each group to complete a plot outline.

Once groups have completed outlining character and plot, groups can begin the Claymation process. Consult the following resources for specific guidance on storyboards, clay character and set building, and the shooting of the video.

Ms. Daniel's Web Page

http://www-bioc.rice.edu/precollege/msdaniel/claymation.html

Making Claymation in the Classroom by Melinda Kolk

http://www.tech4learning.com/userfiles/file/pdfs/Frames/Making_Claymation_in_the_Classroom.pdf

Clay Animation by Lynne Pike

https://jserwe.wikispaces.com/file/view/claymation-1.pdf/363040424/claymation-1.pdf

Once learners have created Hero's Journey Claymation video, provide an opportunity for videos to be viewed by the entire group.

Following viewing, discuss these questions: What similarities and differences exist between each Hero's Journey? Does each Hero's Journey have the same stages? What other tales (including books and movies of which you may be familiar) might also be considered a Hero's Journeys, and Why?

Connecting to Standards

- College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading K-12 Key Ideas and Details, Craft and Structure, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity
- Reading Standards for Literature K-12 Key Ideas and Details, Craft and Structure, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity
- Writing Standards 6-12 Text Types and Purposes, Research to Build and Present Knowledge, Range of Writing

- College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading 6-12 Conventions of Standard English, Knowledge of Language, Vocabulary Acquisition and Use
- Language Standards 6-12 Conventions of Standard English, Knowledge of Language, Vocabulary Acquisition and Use
- Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12 Key Ideas and Details, Craft and Structure, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity