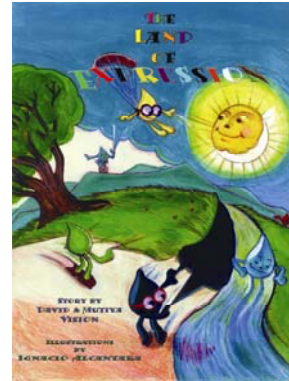


Lesson Plan Developed and Tested by  
Jane Cyphers - 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher  
P.S. 10, Brooklyn, New York

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The Land of Expression  
Lesson Plan #2  
WHAT DOES THAT WORD MEAN TO YOU?  
Grades 3 and up



**PURPOSE:**

- To explore the power of words and their influence on our emotions.
- To understand the deeper meaning of words and how they relate to our lives.
- To explore different ways to describe or express a word.
- To learn how a dictionary can help us express ourselves more precisely.
- To use masks to focus on the meaning of difficult vocabulary words.

**MATERIALS:** *The Land of Expression* by Mutiya and David Vision, Illustrations by Ignacio Alcantara, chart paper, notebooks, paper plates, various decorative materials for the masks, crayons or markers, dictionaries, yarn, staples to attach yarn to the masks, scissors.

**PROCEDURE:**

1. As you reread *The Land of Expression* with the students, collect vocabulary words from the texts that have intense emotional triggers.
2. Categorize and chart the words as either “comfortable” words, or “upsetting” words. Here are the comfortable words my students choose: abundance, explore, unity, brilliance, harmony, compassion, respect, distinctive, value, complement, awesome, appreciated, universe. Here are the upsetting words they chose: bully, mistreated, misery, perish, worthless, scatter, rejected, desperate, and distinctive. Notice that distinctive was listed in both categories.
3. The students will then choose a word that they wish to explore. Using dictionaries they will work in pairs delving into the meaning of their words. Each pair will include a word from each category.
4. The students will then create simple masks that represent their words. They can use any variety of media they like to create their mask. (Paper plates cut in half work great as a base. Cut a little hump for the nose and eyeholes. The other side of the plate can be used as a headdress if they choose. Symbols, shapes and pictures can be used to create the mask.
5. After the masks are complete, the students will develop a similar word, expressive sound or body movements to accompany their mask. For example, misery might be accompanied by a deep sigh or a wail. Compliment might be accompanied by “Nice, nice!” The students’ imaginations will take over here.

6. After a photo session and the students have been given a chance to “perform” a tableau (a group of models or motionless figures representing a scene from a story) in their mask, here comes the fun part.
7. Reread *The Land of Expression* and every time one of the words from the chart is spoken, the child wearing the mask that depicts that word will rise and perform their word. This is continued to the end of the reading. It becomes a mini-opera. The masks release the inhibitions of the students and they are able to focus more on the meaning of their word.

**FOLLOW-UP:**

Discussion questions you could focus on:

1. What were your thoughts as you chose your word?
2. What led you to choose the expression that accompanied your mask?
3. What experiences in your life inspired your creation of your mask?
4. How did you feel when you performed your word?
5. How did you feel when wearing your mask?
6. What were the reactions of other classmates when you wore your mask, and what were your reactions to the final performance?

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