

Reading the Subtext

Big Idea: To understand the role of miscommunication and the implications it can have on intention, conversation and relationship between people.

By the end of this lesson students will be able to:

- Explore body language and its varied meaning
- Recognize how tone and expression in one’s voice can have an impact on what we say
- Analyze means of nonverbal and verbal communication

Curriculum Connections

Drama

A1.3 use role play to explore the possibilities of different scenarios, situations, and characters

B3.2 identify problem-solving techniques they have learned through drama activities, and explain how they can be applied in work and other social contexts

English

1.1 identify the purpose of several different listening tasks and set goals for specific tasks

1.2 identify and use several different active listening strategies when participating in a variety of classroom interactions

2.2 demonstrate an understanding of several different interpersonal speaking strategies and adapt them to suit the purpose, situation, and audience, exhibiting sensitivity to cultural differences

2.6 identify several different non-verbal cues and use them, with sensitivity to audience needs, to help convey their meaning

Health and Physical Education

C2.5 describe factors that influence sexual decision making, and demonstrate an understanding of how to use decision-making and communication skills effectively to support choices related to responsible and healthy sexuality

C1.3 demonstrate an understanding of how relationships develop through various stages, and describe the skills and strategies needed to maintain a satisfactory relationship as the relationship evolves (*e.g., communication and interpersonal skills, adaptive and coping skills, conflict resolution strategies*)

Minds On

Students will work together to create a silent scene.

1. Divide students into pairs.
2. Have each pair create a simple one-minute scene that occurs in one location and has a problem that needs to be solved.
3. All communication must be non verbal, the pairs cannot talk.
4. Is the class able to guess what is going on in the scene without the use of dialogue?

Action

Students will work together to create a scene that explores subtext. Begin by posing the question, “What is Subtext?”

1. Divide students into groups.
2. Together they will create a scene where one character’s lines of dialogue say one thing, while their body language says another. (For example, a student tells another student they are happy they got the main part in the play, but their body language is tense, with their arms folded across their body.)
3. Perform these scenes and discuss the subtext in each.

Connect/Consolidate/Discuss

How can subtext be used in a negative way? Why do some people misinterpret the subtext of a conversation? How is subtext used in text messaging? Why is that text messages are often misconstrued?