Pantomime

Reading comprehension and analysis through performance

Suggested Time: 15 minutes

Student Tasks:

- Read and annotate the text
- Move to pairs or small groups
- Play with text as an ensemble

Online ThinkCERCA Resources

- Reading selection

Rationale/Research Base

Mime is a performance-based strategy for reading comprehension and analysis that encourages participants to perform multiple close readings to embody characters, emotions, key moments, and themes from the text, bringing them to life through physical expression and visualization without words.

Optimal Application Notes:

Choose a literary or informational text that contains a key turning point or pivotal moment worth exploring. It could be a scene from a play, a poem, a passage from a book, an essay, or even a news article.

Before:

- Provide students with copies of the text
- Designate a performance space/stage

During:

- Have students read the passage together out loud.
- Ask students to circle key phrases and words and annotate the passage, noting key ideas, emotions, themes, issues, and ideas.
- Have pairs "play" with the text, choosing what they see as the key moment or turning point in the text.
- Have students create a pantomime performance that uses no words, only movement to convey the cause, effect, or motivation of the action.
- Allow time for participants to rehearse their mime.
- Encourage them to experiment with different movements, and expressions and land on three movements that capture the key moment: Before, turning point, and after.
- Have pairs join another pair and share mimes for each other.
- Have groups of four to eight join together to share and discuss their mimes.

Wrap it Up!:

- Wrap up the exercise by summarizing key insights, themes, or emotions that emerged from the tableaux. Discuss how this exercise enhanced participants' understanding of the text and theme.

Scaffolds & Supports:

- Excerpt text and ask basic comprehension questions to ensure students understand the literal level of the text. Translations may also be used to support comprehension.
- Review annotations and ask students to explain their thinking.