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Professor Frazier
Creative Dramatics
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Lesson Plan

Step one: Preplanning, selection of topic, etc.

- **Activity:** “A Tree Grows”
- **Theme:** Narrative Pantomime
- **Source:** Internet website: <http://www.childdrama.com/appletree.html>
- **Drama/learning goals:**
 - * To understand the growth of a seed.
 - * To improve imagination and concentration skills.
- **Skill levels:**
 - * *Skill 2 Concentration:* Members of the group should be able to focus or concentrate on individual and group activities
 - * *Skill 6 Expression as a Character in dramatic scenes:* Members of the group should be able to use their bodies, their imaginations, and their voices
- **Grade/age level intended:** Elementary and Younger

Step two: Presentation of materials

- **Strategies for introducing the activity and establishing the mood:**
 - * Can anyone tell me what the 4 seasons are? What happens in each season? What season are we in now? Good, well today we are all going to be a little acting during a narrative story. During this story we cannot touch each other or talk to each other. We have to pantomime. Does anyone know what pantomiming is?
- **Check for clarity and understanding:**
 - * Are there any questions before we begin?
- **Relationship to current unit:**
 - * Chapter 2 - Imagination
- **Preparation and set-up of materials:**
 - No materials are needed. Clear an area for the activity.

Step three: Discussion

- **Instructions for preparation:**
 - * Assign a couple of students to move the tables and chairs/clear the play area.
 - * Designate the play area
 - * Be sure to narrate this story slowly enough, and with appropriate pauses, so that the students are able to fully experience their own physical discoveries as they enact the story.

• **Instructions for playing:**

* Everyone find your own personal space on the floor and make yourself as small as possible.

*(Turn lights off) You are an apple seed, tightly wrapped in your shell, and buried under the cold ground. It is winter, and you are barely awake. Above you, snow covers the ground. It is totally dark under the ground.

* Now it is spring. The earth around you is growing a little warmer, and you start to feel more awake. The snow above you melts and the water soaks into the earth around you. It feels good. The earth feels warmer, and you seem to be able to pull energy out of the soil.

* It is time to come out of your seed pod. You feel strong and lively. Using all your strength, you push up against your seed pod and break through. You reach upwards into the warm earth trying to reach above the surface. The earth around you is moist, and you soak in the life-giving moisture.

* Finally, with one great push, you emerge from the soil and see, for the first time, the SUN! (Turn on the lights)

* The sun's energy flows into you and you feel stronger and stronger. You stretch upwards and outwards until you are a healthy seedling. The gentle spring rains nourish and refresh you. Just take a moment to enjoy it. (Take a longer pause here.)

* Now let's move ahead a few years. You have grown into a strong young tree about the size of a young person. You have beautiful green leaves that soak up the sun and make you strong. But you want to grow taller. You want to be a tree. So you gather up all your energy and you push out and up. As the years go by you become a strong and beautiful apple tree. You stand proud in the sun and enjoy your own strength and beauty.

* Now it is fall. You have grown and made apples all over your strong branches. The apples have seeds, which might someday become new apple trees. The apples are heavy. Your branches are strong, but there are so many apples. You feel weighed down. You feel as if your branches might break.

* Here come some children. You can't talk to them, but you know they are coming for the apples. The children pick your apples, and your branches feel light. You know they will take them away and eat them. You know they will throw away the seeds, and that some of those seeds might grow to be new apple trees.

* Almost all of your apples are gone. But you know you will grow more next year. You feel thankful to those children. You hope they will enjoy the apples. (Take a longer pause here.)

* Now it is winter. All of your leaves have fallen. But you know you will grow more next spring. Now it is time to rest. You rest.

Strategies for involvement:

*Encourage and support all participants. Be sure to reinforce creativity and nonverbal.

Step four: Playing the material

• **Instructions:**

• **Sidecoaching ideas:**

* Remind the students to put as much detail in the scenes as possible.

• **Your participation:**

*She/he can stay on the sidelines to side coach struggling participants. Also, the coach can go around to each child and give further ideas.

Step five: Evaluation and reflection

• **Questions to generate discussion and reflection:**

* How did you feel when you first broke through the seed pod? Who felt a sense of accomplishment? Did anyone feel a little afraid?

* What was it like when you first saw the sun? How many were happy? How many were proud?

* How did it feel to become a big strong tree?

* How did you feel when the children picked your apples?

* Most of you felt a very strong emotion when you first saw the sun. How is that possible, since we were all right here in the classroom and the sun doesn't even shine in here?

* What part of your mind did you use to see the sun?

* Did you know your imagination was so powerful?

Step six: Replaying

• **Be ready to respond to requests to replay the activity!**

• **Strategies to encourage replaying:**

*Encourage group to replay this activity with friends or even at a family get-together. It can be a lot of fun!

*It may be easier to replay the activity the second time after they have participated once already.

Step seven: Evaluation and reflection

• **Questions to generate discussion and reflection:** See step five!