

Let's Read! 2022
Foundational lesson: Embodied Metaphors and Similes
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Topic: Language and Storytelling

Essential Questions: What is the power of language and words?
 How do metaphors and similes impact our reading experience?

Time: 45 Minutes

Materials: None

Chapter focus: The House on Mango Street, Chanclas (and other chapters)

Language focus: Simile (comparing two things that are seemingly unrelated using “like” or “as”) and Metaphor (comparing two things that are seemingly unrelated without using “like” or “as”; a metaphor often states something IS the thing it is being compared to, rather than similar to it)

→ **Engage (15 Min)**

Poster Dialogue (on metaphors and similes)

Step 1:

In the first chapter, Esperanza describes her mother’s hair as being “like little candy circles all curly and pretty.” *What does this metaphor suggest about Esperanza’s feelings for her mother?* Ask students *What is the difference between a metaphor and a simile?* Provide definitions with examples.

Step 2:

Write open-ended prompts/questions at the top of 4 poster-sized pieces of paper:

1. *Similes that Esperanza uses...*
2. *What information about Esperanza or the person and thing she describes does the simile you provided convey?*
3. *Metaphors that Esperanza uses...*
4. *What information about Esperanza or the person and thing she describes does the metaphor you provided convey?*

Put the posters on the walls of the classroom. To begin, invite students to use a marker to silently respond to each prompt/question, in any order they prefer. If they finish early, ask them to read/respond to what other students have written.

Step 3:

Once finished, facilitate the groups’ meaning-making process and read aloud some of the words and phrases from each poster. Look at where similes and metaphors connect/differ and how they impact our reading experience.

→ **Explore (20 Min)**

Statues

Step 1:

In "Chanclas," an embarrassed Esperanza declines her cousin's invitation to dance because her feet "are growing bigger and bigger." Cisneros is describing something that Esperanza projects onto her real-life experience because of her feelings that further suggest other feelings. In this case, the sensation in Esperanza's feet tells us about her self-consciousness and embarrassment. Invite students to stand in a circle around the outside perimeter of the desks (this can also be done seated, though standing with space is preferable). Students face out when making their statues in their own space after which they turn around to share their statue. *In a moment, I will give you a situation (similar to Esperanza's). Your job is to use your whole bodies, including your faces, to create a statue that represents your response, i.e. describe through a statue each of the following situations in terms of the sensations they might evoke in different parts of your body.*

- a) *having to dance in front of everybody*
- b) *finding out that the person you like also likes you*

Step 2:

Ask half the group to relax and half the group to hold their statues; and take time to look at and interpret the statues with the other half of the group, then switch. *What do you see? How do they feel about this situation? Where do you see that emotion embodied?* Ask the students to come up with different descriptions of the statues they see, using similes and metaphors. Write some of them on the board.

Step 3:

Continue with the prompts but this time, ask the students to make a statue and when called upon to verbalize those sensations or even make the gestures that go along with their description. Write prompts on the board to scaffold, such as "_____ feels like _____" (simile) / "_____ is _____" (metaphor). *Use metaphor and simile, just like Esperanza, to describe the sensations these situations evoke. For example, "Having to dance in front of everybody feels like a thousand bees are chasing me" (gesture a running motion along with it).*

- d) *driving for the first time*
- e) *cooking a whole meal for a family holiday*
- f) *making a speech at your high school graduation (or another ceremony)*

→ **Reflect (10 Min)**

- *How does the use of metaphors and similes impact your experience of reading the text?*
- *When we did statues, how did it feel to take on that pose in your body? How did it feel to explain the response with words? Which one felt more comfortable? Why do you think is that so?*
- *How might understandings of and reactions to situations differ from one person to the next? What responsibility do we have to treat these stories and perspectives (which may be very different from our own) with respect and consideration?*