Teaching Strategies for Nurturing Peace
Peace is relational

- Even in its most individual concern, e.g. peace of mind, peace with one’s self, the concept is inherently relational.

- Relationships can be nurtured through dialogue.

- Dialogue can be achieved only through compassionate sharing (of stories, feelings and ideas) and listening.

- In other words, through openness.
The Dialogue Decalogue

• written by one of the pioneers of interreligious dialogue, Prof. Leonard Swidler.

• primarily composed for interreligious/inter-ideological dialogue, but carries the heart of what it means to have a real dialogue.

• a necessary skill for any teaching strategies to nurture peace.

• serves as an activity for healing whenever there is a rupture of whatever kind.

• a good habit to develop and can be applied to day to day life, not just in the classroom.
Dialogue is a conversation on a common subject between two or more persons with differing views, the primary purpose of which is for each participant to learn from the other so that s/he can change and grow.

But dialogue is *not* debate. In dialogue each partner must listen to the other as openly and sympathetically as s/he can in an attempt to understand the other’s position as precisely and, as it were, as much from within, as possible. Such an attitude automatically includes the assumption that at any point we might find the partner’s position so persuasive that, if we would act with integrity, we would have to change, and change can be disturbing.
First Commandment

The primary purpose of dialogue is to learn, that is, to change and grow in the perception and understanding of reality, and then to act accordingly. Minimally, the very fact that I learn that my dialogue partner believes “this” rather than “that” proportionally changes my attitude toward her; and a change in my attitude is a significant change in me. We enter into dialogue so that we can learn, change, and grow, not so we can force change on the other, as one hopes to do in debate—a hope realized in inverse proportion to the frequency and ferocity with which debate is entered into. On the other hand, because in dialogue each partner comes with the intention of learning and changing herself, one’s partner in fact will also change. Thus the goal of debate, and much more, is accomplished far more effectively by dialogue.
Second Commandment

A dialogue must be a two-sided project—within each religious or ideological community and between religious or ideological communities. Because of the “communal” nature of interreligious dialogue, and since the primary goal of dialogue is that each partner learn and change himself, it is also necessary that each participant enter into dialogue not only with his partner across the faith or ideological line but also with those who share the same practice, ideas and ideals. Only thus can the whole community eventually learn and change, moving toward an ever more perceptive insight into reality.
Third Commandment

Each participant must come to the dialogue with complete honesty and sincerity. It should be made clear in what direction the major and minor thrusts of the tradition move, what the future shifts might be, and, if necessary, where the participant has difficulties with her own tradition. No false fronts have any place in dialogue.

Conversely—each participant must assume a similar complete honesty and sincerity in the other partners. Not only will the absence of sincerity prevent dialogue from happening, but the absence of the assumption of the partner’s sincerity will do so as well. In brief: no trust, no dialogue.
Fourth Commandment

In a dialogue we must not compare our ideals with our partner’s practice, but rather our ideals with our partner’s ideals, our practice with our partner’s practice. For example, compare the former Hindu practice of burning live widows (suttee) with the Christian former practice of burning witches and auto da fe’s.
Each participant must define himself. Only the Jew, for example, can define what it means to be a Jew. The rest can only describe what it looks like from the outside. Moreover, because dialogue is a dynamic medium, as each participant learns, he will change and hence continually deepen, expand, and modify his self-definition as a Jew—being careful to remain in constant dialogue with fellow Jews. Thus it is mandatory that each dialogue partner define what it means to be an authentic member of his own tradition.

Conversely—the one interpreted must be able to recognize herself in the interpretation. This is the golden rule of interreligious hermeneutics, as has been often reiterated by the “apostle of interreligious dialogue,” Raimundo Panikkar. For the sake of understanding, each dialogue participant will naturally attempt to express for herself what she thinks is the meaning of the partner’s statement; the partner must be able to recognize herself in that expression. The advocate of “a world theology,” Wilfred Cantwell Smith, would add that the expression must also be verifiable by critical observers who are not involved.
Sixth Commandment

Each participant must come to the dialogue with no hard-and-fast assumptions as to where the points of disagreement are. Rather, each partner should not only listen to the other partner with openness and sympathy but also attempt to agree with the dialogue partner as far as is possible while still maintaining integrity with his own tradition; where he absolutely can agree no further without violating his own integrity, precisely there is the real point of disagreement—which most often turns out to be different from the point of disagreement that was falsely assumed ahead of time.
Seventh Commandment

Dialogue can take place only between equals—both coming to learn. Both must come to learn from each other. Therefore, if, for example, the Muslim views Hinduism as inferior, or if the Hindu views Islam as inferior, there will be no dialogue.
Eight Commandment

Dialogue can take place only on the basis of mutual trust: approach first those issues most likely to provide common ground, thereby establishing human trust. Although dialogue must occur with some kind of “communal” dimension, that is, the participants must be involved as members of a it is also fundamentally true that it is only persons who can enter into dialogue. But a dialogue among persons can be built only on personal trust. Hence it is wise not to tackle the most difficult problems in the beginning, but rather to approach first those issues most likely to provide some common ground, thereby establishing the basis of human trust. Then, gradually, as this personal trust deepens and expands, the more thorny matters can be undertaken. Thus, as in learning we move from the known to the unknown, so in dialogue we proceed from commonly held matters—which, given our mutual ignorance resulting from centuries of hostility, will take us quite some time to discover fully—to discuss matters of disagreement.
Ninth Commandment

*Persons entering into interreligious, interideological dialogue must be at least minimally self-critical of both themselves and their own religious or ideological traditions.*

A lack of such self-criticism implies that one’s tradition already has all the correct answers. Such an attitude makes dialogue not only unnecessary, but even impossible, since we enter into dialogue primarily so we can learn—which obviously is impossible if our tradition has never made a misstep, if it has all the right answers. Surely, in interreligious, interideological dialogue one must stand within a religious or ideological tradition with integrity and conviction, but such integrity and conviction must include, not exclude, a healthy self-criticism. Without it there can be no dialogue—and, indeed, no integrity.
Tenth Commandment

Each participant eventually must attempt to experience the partner’s religion or ideology “from within,” for a religion or ideology is not merely something of the head, but also of the spirit, heart, and “whole being,” individual and communal. While retaining our own religious/ideological integrity, we need to find ways of experiencing something of the emotional and spiritual power of the symbols and cultural vehicles of our partner’s religion/ideology— and then come back to our own, enriched and expanded, having experienced at least a little of the affective side of our partner’s religion or ideology.
Dialogue of the Holy

Interreligious, interideological dialogue operates in four areas—the “Dialogues of the Head, Hands, Heart and Holy”: the practical (Dialogue of the Hands), where we collaborate to help humanity; the aesthetic/spiritual (Dialogue of the Heart) where we attempt to experience the partner’s expressions of beauty and her/his religion or ideology “from within”; the cognitive (Dialogue of the Head), where we seek understanding and truth, and the fourth, the integrative area (Dialogue of the Holy).
Biopoem: Connecting Identity and Poetry

Rationale

“Who am I?” is a question on the minds of many adolescents. This activity helps students clarify important elements of their identity. When biopoems are shared they can help build peer relationships and foster a cohesive classroom community. Biopoems get beyond aspects of identity that are often more obvious and familiar (such as ethnicity, gender and age), by focusing on other factors that shape our identities such as experiences, relationships, hopes and interests. Biopoems can also be a way for students to demonstrate what they know about historical or literary figures. It provides a structure for students to think more critically about an individual’s traits, experiences and character.

Procedure

Step one: Preparation

1) Selecting the focus of the biopoem

Often students write biopoems about themselves. But, biopoems can also be written about historical or literary figures. You can assign students a specific individual to use as the focus of the biopoem or you can allow students to choose an individual relevant to the current unit of student.
2) Selecting what you want included in the biopoem

A biopoem typically includes the following information:

- Adjectives that you would use to describe yourself.
- Relationships in your life (e.g. friend, brother, daughter)
- Things you love.
- Important memories
- Fears
- Accomplishments.
- Hopes or wishes.
- Home (location)

You can adapt this format to include other items such as important moments, heroes, beliefs, special sayings or words.

Step two: Brainstorming

Before beginning to write a biopoem, it is helpful to give students an opportunity to brainstorm ideas they might include in their final poems. You can provide students with a worksheet to help structure their brainstorming.

Step three: Writing

Explain the format of the biopoem to your students, creating a template and/or providing an example they can refer to as they write.
Biopoem template

(Line 1) First name

(Line 2) Three or four adjectives that describe the person

(Line 3) Important relationship

(Line 4) Two or three things, people, or ideas that this person loves

(Line 5) Three feelings this person has experienced

(Line 6) Three fears this person has

(Line 7) Accomplishments

(Line 8) Two or three things this person wants to see happen or wants to experience

(Line 9) The residence of the person

(Line 10) Last name
Jackson

Friendly, silly, athletic, tall

Son of John and Brenda

Who loves chocolate chip ice cream, the Grizzlies, and Saturdays

Who feels happy, tired, and lucky

And who is scared of tests, thunderstorms, and failure

Who learned how to shoot a three-point shot and won a basketball trophy

Who hopes to see an NBA game and make his parents proud

Lives in Memphis, Tennessee

Tillman
Step four: Sharing

There are many ways students can share their biopoems. They could read them as a gallery walk or share them with a partner. Or, you might want to try one of these sharing strategies:

Students could read their poems to the whole class. Each reader could be assigned a “responder.” After the biopoem is read aloud, the responder has to comment about something he or she heard that was particularly interesting or surprising.

Ask students to pass their poems to their neighbor. Give time for a thorough reading. Have students silently write comments or questions in the margin. Every 3-5 minutes have students pass the poems on to the next person. Repeat as time allows. At the end of the time, students should have a poem filled with comments and questions. Be sure to remind students about expectations for appropriate comments.
Learn to Listen/Listen to Learn - Developing Deeper Conversations

Rationale

This discussion format helps students develop their discussion skills, particularly their ability to listen to one another. It is especially useful when trying to discuss controversial topics.

Procedure

Step One: Journal writing

Before sharing their ideas, it is important to give students the opportunity to clarify their own views. We suggest giving students five to ten minutes to write in their journals about the topic they will be discussing. After this writing time, ask students to underline or highlight the ideas they find most interesting or worthy of sharing.

Step Two: Sharing and listening in small groups

Divide the class into small groups of four or five students. Once students are in their groups they should appoint a facilitator to keep the group focused. Each student now has the opportunity to share a part of his/her journal entry with the group. During this go-around, no one should interrupt the speaker. When it is each student's turn to share, he/she should not directly respond to a point someone else has made. Instead, the sharing should focus on the individual's own feelings and reactions.

Step Three: Discussing

Drawing from what they just heard, small groups now have an open discussion. Before beginning this step, explain to students that this discussion is not about debating knowledge or arguing viewpoints. It is about listening to each other, and acknowledging our diverse array of thoughts, fears and hopes. Students should also be reminded that everyone will not necessarily agree, and that the goal is to better understand one’s own viewpoint and the perspectives of others. After 10-15 of discussion, groups should decide on two or three ideas from their conversation to share with the whole class.
Step Four: Group presentations
Small groups present their key ideas to the larger class. You can facilitate a whole-class discussion prompted by these ideas or you can proceed directly to personal journal reflections.

Step Five: Journal writing
Give students the opportunity to reread the journal entry they wrote at the beginning of this activity. Then, ask them to describe how their ideas have changed. Perhaps their ideas have grown stronger or maybe they have shifted a little. It is possible that some students have completely changed their attitudes or that the conversations have left them uncertain or with new questions. Prompts you might use to structure include: What did you learn from this activity? What questions are you left with? What did you learn more from – listening or presenting your own ideas? Explain your answer.
Rationale

The “fishbowl” is a teaching strategy that helps students practice being contributors and listeners in a discussion. Students ask questions, present opinions, and share information when they sit in the “fishbowl” circle, while students on the outside of the circle listen carefully to the ideas presented and pay attention to process. Then the roles reverse. This strategy is especially useful when you want to make sure all students participate in the discussion, when you want to help students reflect on what a “good discussion” looks like, and when you need a structure for discussing controversial or difficult topics. Fishbowls make excellent pre-writing activities, often unearthing questions or ideas that students can explore more deeply in an independent assignment.

Procedure

Step one: Selecting a topic for the fishbowl

Almost any topic is suitable for a fishbowl discussion. The most effective prompts (question or text) do not have one right answer, but rather allow for multiple perspectives and opinions. The fishbowl is an excellent strategy to use when discussing dilemmas, for example.

Step two: Setting up the room

A fishbowl requires a circle of chairs (“the fishbowl”) and enough room around the circle for the remaining students to observe what is happening in the “fishbowl.” Sometimes teachers place enough chairs for half of the students in the class to sit in the fishbowl, while other times teachers limit the chairs in the fishbowl. Typically six to twelve chairs allows for a range of perspectives while still allowing each student an opportunity to speak. The observing students often stand around the fishbowl.
Step three: Preparation

Like many structured conversations, fishbowl discussions are most effective when students have had a few minutes to prepare ideas and questions in advance.

Step four: Discussing norms and rules of the discussion

There are many ways to structure a fishbowl discussion. Sometimes teachers have half the class sit in the fishbowl for 10-15 minutes and then say “switch,” at which point the listeners enter the fishbowl and the speakers become the audience. Another common fishbowl format is the “tap” system, where students on the outside of the fishbowl gently tap a student on the inside, indicating that they should switch roles. See the variations section for more ideas about how to structure this activity.

Regardless of the particular rules you establish, you want to make sure these are explained to students beforehand. You also want to provide instructions for the students in the audience. What should they be listening for? Should they be taking notes? Before beginning the fishbowl, you may wish to review guidelines for having a respectful conversation. Sometimes teachers ask audience members to pay attention to how these norms are followed by recording specific aspects of the discussion process such as the number of interruptions, respectful or disrespectful language used, or speaking times (Who is speaking the most? The least?)

Step five: Debriefing the fishbowl discussion

After the discussion, you can ask students to reflect on how they think the discussion went and what they learned from it. Students can also evaluate their participation as listeners and as participants. They could also provide suggestions for how to improve the quality of discussion in the future. These reflections can be in writing, or can be structured as a small or large group conversation.
Variations on the Fishbowl

Variations

1) A fishbowl for opposing positions

This is a type of group discussion that can be utilized when there are two distinct positions or arguments. Each group has an opportunity to discuss the issue while the other group observes. The goal of this technique is for one group to gain insight about the other perspective by having this opportunity to listen and formulate questions. After both sides have shared and listened, students are often given the opportunity to discuss their questions and ideas with students representing the other side of the argument.

2) A fishbowl for multiple perspectives

This format allows students to look at a question or a text from various perspectives. First, assign perspectives to groups of students. These perspectives could represent the viewpoints of different historical figures, characters in a novel, social categories (e.g. young, old, male, female, working-class laborer, industrialist, peasant, noble, soldier, priest, etc.), or political/philosophical points of view. Each group discusses the same question, event or text representing their assigned perspective. The goal of this technique is for students to consider how perspective shapes meaning-making. After all groups have shared, students can be given the opportunity to discuss their ideas and questions with peers from other groups.
Cafe Conversation

Rationale

Understanding the past requires students to develop an awareness of different perspectives. The Café Conversation teaching strategy helps students practice perspective-taking by requiring students to represent a particular point-of-view in a small group discussion. During a conversation with people representing other backgrounds and experiences, students become more aware of the role many factors play (i.e. social class, occupation, gender, age, etc) in terms of shaping one’s attitudes and perspectives on historical events. Café Conversations can be used as an assessment tool or can prepare students to write an essay about a specific historical event.

Procedure

Step one: Teacher preparation

Select 5-10 personalities that represent different political attitudes and backgrounds during the time period you are studying. The individuals you select to represent different attitudes can be real people, or composites of real people. For each personality, prepare a short biography which includes information such as gender, age, family status (married, single, how many children, etc.), occupation, education level and significant life events. Next, you will need to select an issue or event relevant to the time period that you want all of these personalities to discuss. For example, students can discuss who they will vote for in an upcoming election or they might discuss how war is affecting their lives.

Step two: Students prepare for Café Conversation

Assign students a particular personality to represent. Give students the relevant background information and/or biography to read. After reading this background information, you might have students create an identity chart for their character. Then ask students to hypothesize how this person would feel about the matter at hand – the event or question they will be discussing during the Café Conversation. Often teachers have students work on this step in small groups with other students who have been assigned the same person to represent at the café. To ensure that students accurately represent their person’s point of view, before the Café Conversation begins you might review a worksheet students are required to complete and/or have a brief check-in with groups.
Jigsaw: Divide the class into groups so that each group has students representing different personalities. In this format, many Café Conversations will be happening simultaneously. If one group ends early, you can let them go around the room and listen to the conversations other groups are having.

Fishbowl: Make a circle of chairs in the center of the room. The number of chairs should represent the number of assigned personalities. Invite one member from each group to join the conversation. The rest of the class watches the conversation. At certain moments, you can announce switch, meaning that a student in the fishbowl is replaced by another group member. Or, you can allow students to “tap” a group member on the shoulder when he/she wants a turn to speak.

Step four: Journal writing

After the Café Conversations have wrapped up, ask students to write a journal entry reflecting on their experience at the café. Possible journal prompts include:

- What do you think it may have felt like for your character to hear these different perspectives? How do you think it might have changed his/her point of view, if at all?
- How did it feel for you to participate in the Café Conversation? During what part of the conversation did you feel most comfortable? Least comfortable? Why do you think that is?
- What did you learn about this moment in history from participating in this activity?
- What did you learn about yourself or about human behavior from participating in this activity?

Step five: Debrief

Give students the opportunity to debrief this activity. You could facilitate a class discussion, starting with a general question such as, “What did you learn from this activity?” Or, you could begin the debrief discussion as a wraparound with each student sharing one idea from their journal entry.
Big Paper - Building a Silent Conversation

Use this discussion strategy to help students explore a topic and to engage all students, especially those who are less likely to participate in a verbal discussion. Using writing and silence, this strategy allows students to slow down their thinking processes and to focus on their peers’ views.

Rationale

This discussion strategy uses writing and silence as tools to help students explore a topic in-depth. Having a written conversation with peers slows down students' thinking process and gives them an opportunity to focus on the views of others. This strategy also creates a visual record of students' thoughts and questions that can be referred to later in a course. Using the Big Paper strategy can help engage shy students who are not as likely to participate in a verbal discussion. After using this strategy several times, students’ comfort, confidence, and skill with this method increases.

Procedure

Step one: Preparation

First, you will need to select the “stimulus” – the material that students will respond to. As the stimulus for a Big Paper activity, teachers have used questions, quotations, historical documents, excerpts from novels, poetry, or images. Groups can be given the same stimulus for discussion, but more often they are given different texts related to the same theme. This activity works best when students are working in pairs or triads. Make sure that all students have a pen or marker. Some teachers have students use different colored markers to make it easier to see the back-and-forth flow of a conversation. Each group also needs a “big paper” (typically a sheet of poster paper) that can fit a written conversation and added comments. In the middle of the page, tape or write the “stimulus” (image, quotation, excerpt, etc.) that will be used to spark the students’ discussion.
Step two: The Importance of Silence

Inform the class that this activity will be completed in silence. All communication is done in writing. Students should be told that they will have time to speak in pairs and in the large groups later. Go over all of the instructions at the beginning so that they do not ask questions during the activity. Also, before the activity starts, the teacher should ask students if they have questions, to minimize the chance that students will interrupt the silence once it has begun. You can also remind students of their task as they begin each new step.

Step three: Comment on Your Big Paper

Each group receives a Big Paper and each student a marker or pen. The groups read the text (or look at the image) in silence. After students have read, they are to comment on the text, and ask questions of each other in writing on the Big Paper. The written conversation must start on the text but can stray to wherever the students take it. If someone in the group writes a question, another member of the group should address the question by writing on the Big Paper. Students can draw lines connecting a comment to a particular question. Make sure students know that more than one of them can write on the Big Paper at the same time. The teacher can determine the length of this step, but it should be at least 15 minutes.

Step four: Comment on Other Big Papers

Still working in silence, the students leave their partner and walk around reading the other Big Papers. Students bring their marker or pen with them and can write comments or further questions for thought on other Big Papers. Again, the teacher can determine the length of time for this step based on the number of Big Papers and his/her knowledge of the students.
Step five: Return to Your Own Big Paper

Silence is broken. The pairs rejoin back at their own Big Paper. They should look at any comments written by others. Now they can have a free, verbal conversation about the text, their own comments, what they read on other papers, and comments their fellow students wrote back to them. At this point, you might ask students to take out their journals and identify a question or comment that stands out to them at this moment.

Step six: Class Discussion

Finally, debrief the process with the large group. The conversation can begin with a simple prompt such as, “What did you learn from doing this activity?” This is the time to delve deeper into the content and use ideas on the Big Papers to bring out the students' thoughts. The discussion can also touch upon the importance and difficulty of staying silent and the level of comfort with this activity.
Variations: Big paper

Variations

• Little paper: With “Little Paper,” the “stimulus” (question, excerpt, quotation, etc) is placed in the center of a regular sized piece of paper. Often teachers select 4-5 different “stimuli” and create groups of the same size. Each student begins by commenting on the “stimuli” on his/her little paper. After a few minutes, the little paper is passed to the student on the left (or right). This process is repeated until all students have had the opportunity to comment on every little paper. All of this is done in silence, just like the Big Paper activity. Then students review the little paper they had first, noticing comments made by their peers. Finally, small groups have a discussion about the questions and ideas that strike them from this exercise.

• Gallery walk: The Big Paper activity can also be structured as a gallery walk. With this structure, Big Papers are taped to the walls or placed on tables, and students comment on the Big Papers in silence, at their own pace. Sometimes teachers assign students, often in pairs of triads, to a particular Big Paper and then have them switch to the next one after five or ten minutes.
Graffiti Board

Rationale

Graffiti Boards are a part of the classroom, usually a very large sheet of paper, a whiteboard or chalkboard, where students engage in a written discussion. The purpose of the Graffiti Board strategy is to help students “hear” each other’s ideas. Some benefits of this strategy are that it 1) can be implemented in 5-10 minutes, 2) provides a way for shy students to engage in a conversation, 3) provides a record of students’ ideas and questions that can be referred to at other points during the lesson (or even later in the unit or year), 4) provides space and time for students to process emotional material in the classroom and reflect on their own thoughts as well as the thoughts of others.

Graffiti Boards can be used as a preview or warm-up activity to introduce a new topic or to help students organize prior knowledge about content they are about to study. This strategy can also be used to help students share reactions to texts as preparation for a class discussion, writing assignment, or another project. If you are looking for a silent discussion activity that is structured to encourage deeper understanding and reflection, try a similar teaching strategy called “Big Paper.”

Procedure

Step One: Preparation
You will need a large space in your room where several students (the more the better) can write at the same time. Some teachers cover a section of the wall with butcher or chart paper, while other teachers use a whiteboard or chalkboard. You will also need plenty of pens and markers. For this activity, markers work better than pens or pencils because they allow students comments to be read from a distance. It is best if you have one for each student.
Before the activity begins contract with the students in terms of what an appropriate response is and how to express one’s discomfort with something in an appropriate way. Students should be told that they are to remain silent during this activity. Make sure students know that several students can write at once. Students can write their own response to the prompt as well as respond to the questions and ideas that other students have written. They should draw lines connecting their comments to those of other students. Some teachers require all students to post at least one question or comment to the graffiti wall.

Step Three: Invite Students to the Board
Students are invited to write comments and questions on the graffiti board. It is typical for most students to be standing near the graffiti wall during this activity, so that they can more easily read and comment on what has been written. Writing on the graffiti board often starts out slow and then increases as the graffiti board contains more comments to elicit student response. Typically, teachers give students 5-10 minutes for silent writing on the graffiti board, but the activity can go longer if students are still writing.

Step Four: Springboard for Discussion
The ideas on the graffiti board make an effective springboard for a discussion. You could begin a conversation by asking students to summarize what they see on the board or what they notice about areas of agreement and disagreement.
Bodysculpting: using theatre to explore ideas and strong emotions

Rationale

Bodysculpting is a strategy teachers use to help students debrief material (readings, videos, fieldtrips, survivor testimony, etc) that evokes strong feelings. Nonverbal forms of expression can be an effective medium for students when they are trying to process powerful emotional content that is difficult to put into words. The bodysculpting teaching strategy provides a nonverbal form of expression by requiring students to represent ideas through body-positioning.

Procedure

Step One: Preparation
After students have encountered a powerful text, video, testimony or other experience, ask them to do a ‘quick write’ in their journal about the material. Prompts you might use to structure journal-writing include: What ideas, and questions are on your mind now? What feelings did this material bring up for you?

Step Two: Word selection
For bodysculpting, students need to use words as prompts for their creative work. Drawing from their journal entries, ask the class to brainstorm a list of feelings they experienced as they explored the material. Then ask them to brainstorm a list of words that describe the actual story they heard (or read). Words that work well for body sculpting include: fear, strength, power, sad, confused, trapped, etc.
Step Three: Review bodysculpting rules
Before students begin bodysculpting, it is important to review the "rules" for sculpting:

1. Decide who will be the sculptor and who will be the clay.
2. Sculptors can either physically mold the “clay” or act as a mirror for them to show the “clay” the position/image they want.
3. Images can be concrete or abstract.
4. Sculptors must treat their clay with gentleness and respect. (Very Important!)
5. There are no wrong answers; whatever image you get is fine.
6. All body sculpting must be done in silence.

It is a good idea to post these rules on the board as a constant reminder.

Step Three: Model bodysculpting
Model the role of the ‘sculptor’ for the class and ask a student volunteer to be the “clay.” Spend a minute or two sculpting a word. Show the class how the sculptor can physically mold the clay or provide a mirror image of how he/she wants the clay to appear.

Step Four: Students work in pairs
Divide students into As and Bs and then have an A partner with a B. Assign a word to the class. In the first round, As are the sculptors and Bs are the clay. Give As two to three minutes to sculpt their clay. While all the Bs freeze, the As walk around and look at the "sculpture garden" to see the various representations of the assigned word. Then have the pairs switch roles so that Bs are the sculptors and As are the clay. Repeat these steps for as many words as you have time for (or until students’ attention wanes).
Step Five: Debrief
Begin the debrief by having students write in their journals. Prompts you can use to guide journal-writing include:

What did you learn from bodysculpting? In what ways, if at all, do you think about the material differently now?
Which sculptures stood out to you? Why?
How did it feel to be the sculptor? How did it feel to be the clay? Which role did you prefer more? Why?

After journal writing, you can have a class discussion based on these questions. Or you can facilitate a wraparound where each student presents one comment from their journal entry.

Variations

Group Sculpting: Two pairs join, forming groups of four. Groups decide who will be the sculptor first. The sculptor now has three pieces of clay to sculpt. They can form one whole image or separate images, like a triptych. Each person in the group gets a chance to sculpt.
Quotation sculpting: Instead of sculpting a word, students can sculpt a phrase or quotation selected from a text. Students often need several pieces of “clay” to work with to represent the quotation.