Pre and Post Reading Lesson Plans:
Wirehead by Benjamin Brown

Pre-Reading Physical Theatre Lesson Plan:

Warm-ups – 15 minutes

8-4-2-1
Students stand in a circle. They will count to 8 as fast as they can while tapping their head 8 times, then count again tapping shoulders 8 times, then belly, then butt. Then, do the same but counting and tapping 4 times each (head shoulders belly butt), then twice, then once. Then, do the same thing again, but add movement. When tapping head, circle moves to the right. Shoulders, circle moves left. Belly, circle moves in. Butt, circle moves out. Go through the sequence from 8 to 4 to 2 to 1 – fun silly focus game

Whoosh
Students stand in a circle – they send the "whoosh" around the circle by saying "WHOOSH" and making a sweeping motion with their hands toward the next person in the circle. It goes around fast. When the whoosh comes to you, you can "whoosh" (continue passing it to the next person), or "whoa" (pull up on invisible reins like you're stopping a horse, which causes the whoosh to change directions), or "avalanche!" (which you scream, and causes everyone to scream with terror, and run, screaming to a new spot in the circle – whoever said avalanche then starts the "whoosh" again). After you've done basic whoosh for a few minutes, start adding themes. Students have to "whoosh", "whoa", and "avalanche" in the style of the theme. Try robot whoosh, aggressive whoosh, miserable whoosh, mind control whoosh

Circle Sculpt
Students stand in a circle with their backs to the center. You call out a word, then say one, two, three, go! On the go, students all turn to the center and instantly sculpt their body into an image representing the word – no thinking about it, or looking at others – just turn and sculpt! Before you start, tell students: a good sculpture is COMPLETELY frozen, from the fingertips to the eyes! They should use their whole body and be totally energized. If you came over and gave them a push, they shouldn't move, because their muscles are flexed. They should try to use different levels – low to the floor, mid-range, and reaching high. They should use every part of their body deliberately – arms, legs, fingers, angle of the head, etc. For the first two words you call, maybe stop and have all the kids look at someone who is doing a good job – ask that student to stay frozen, then have other students point out what is strong about their sculpture. Discuss literal vs. non-literal – non-literal is better!
Words to practice being non-literal: frustration, clarity, purple, kindness, fabric, travel

Content with Debriefs – 40 minutes

Sculpture Circle: Now that students are warmed up with sculpture, do a repeating activity. Students stay in the circle. One person starts. Leader calls out a word – frustration, for example – student makes a sculpture – once they are frozen – every other student gets in that same sculpture – once everyone is frozen, the first student adds a sound, which the whole group copies. Then everyone relaxes. The leader calls out another word – the next student makes a sculpture, everyone follows lead, etc. Below are the words you should use for this lesson - do as many as the number of students participating – I've given you 20 options below.

Machine, Upgrade, Privilege, IQ, Connection, Multi-task, Control, Vigilante, Surgery, Teamwork, Betrayal, Eternity, Cubicle, Wire, Brainpower, Tool, Implant, Superiority, Complexity, Humanity

Group Sculptures (tableaux)

Put students in groups of 3. Give them the phrase "There are things way more important than happiness." Have them sculpt themselves into a group image representing the phrase. Explain that the qualities of strong sculpture are using your whole body, being on different levels (high, medium and low), have a gazing point so that eyes remain still, and using energy so body looks strong and grounded. Give students 5 minutes to come up with their group sculpture. Then, have each group briefly show what they came up with.

Value Line

Now approach the phrase: "There are things way more important than happiness" as a value judgment. Designate one wall of the room as absolutely yes, the other wall as absolutely no, and the center as neutral. Have students, silently, place themselves in the room based on their response to the question. Then, call on students one at a time to explain their answers.

Scene Teaser

--Print and copy for all students
--Read aloud – have everyone follow along
--Discuss the following:

1. What are some of the difference you notice between Adams and Destry?
2. What has happened to Hammy to change him?
3. What happens at the end of the scene? Why is Adams so shocked?
4. Based on what you have read, and the activities you have done so far, what does the title "Wirehead" mean, and what do you think the play is about?

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Post-Reading Questions for Discussion and Exploration:

- Toward the end of the play, we find out the controversial DJ (shock jock) RIP has also gotten the wire – does this change your opinion of his character? Do you like him more, less, or the same? Explain your answer!
- Would you get the wire if it were available, and you could afford it? Why or why not? If not, what are some of your arguments against? If so, would it benefit just you, or all of humankind?
- Just because we can do something, technologically, should we? Some examples to think about: cloning, altering DNA, genetically modified food...
- Would you describe this play as realistic? Why or why not?
- Laura really wants the wire, and she wants her fiancé Adams to get it too. Destry is totally against anyone having the wire, and his girlfriend agrees. Discuss some of the arguments the

characters made on each side – who do you agree with more? Why?

- By the end, Laura has implanted Destry. We are left with him unconscious on stage. If there were one more scene, what do you think would happen next?
- Was this play a comedy? A drama? A sci-fi play? Horror? Or some combination? Defend your answer with examples!!!
- If you have read other plays, how does *Wirehead* compare? If this is your first play, how was it different from what you expected?