

ARTS • BASED SKILLS & STRATEGIES

• middle school •
• elementary • • high school •

title **Making A Machine**

skill



dance



theatre

about the strategy

This theatre game allows students to use their bodies and voices to create a visual metaphor for ideas and emotions and to communicate as an ensemble. Students enjoy working together in a safe environment to design and perform group “machines” that will be shown to the larger group and possibly expanded upon.

visual

Students observe the workings of various sorts of mechanized processes in order to come up with one that works for their group, (e.g., assembly line, car engine)

auditory

Students use vocalized and percussive noises and sounds to make their machine more effective, words and phrases may also be used

kinesthetic

Each student must move as an integral part of the machine and relate to other machine parts he or she is surrounded by, just as the inner workings of all real machines relate to each other as parts of a whole with a goal or product to be produced

instructional steps

objective Students work together to create a dramatized machine-like metaphor for concepts, ideas, processes or emotions

materials None

procedure

1. Modeling

- Have students observe various machines and talk about what makes something “machine-like”, what are the qualities of a machine and what are some different kinds of machines? How are they alike? How do they differ?
- Discuss some possible kinds of machines that the class might create, map on board the titles students come up with for reference, (e.g., a peace machine, a war machine, a friendship machine, a homework machine, a teacher machine)

Making A Machine

instructional steps

procedure

- Ask for five volunteers and, along with the class, decide on what parts of the machine they might be, creating the machine along with the class.
- Use levels, sounds, inter-related and inter-locking movements to make the students look “machine-like”, have one stand on a chair, one sit, etc. Keep taking ideas from the class and revising until you have the best example of the class created “machine”.
- Have a class discussion on what made the machine work, what might have made it better; what made it visually interesting to watch?

2. Applying

- Break class into groups of five or six
- Have each group decide on a purpose for their machine, and tell them to keep it a secret among themselves so that the rest of the class may guess what sort of machine they are when they share it with the larger group.
- Remind students to either use one of the titles on the board or to think of a strong emotion or idea to use for their machine to make it important and interesting to watch.
- Have students perform their machines for the larger group and ask the group to guess what the machines were making. How could they tell what was going on?
- Have the students be specific in their discussion as to what worked and why. Ask students to go back and work for a few more minutes on their machines in order to improve them; what would make them more effective, what can they use from the critique they had in class?
- As the students perform their revised machines, side coach them to speed up and then break down as machine parts, (students love this part; they get to experiment with the movements in ways that are demanding and creative, your side coaching lines can be something like “Oh no, this machine is speeding up, look what is happening, it is going way too fast! Into “Now it seems to be slowing down, it is breaking...look, it is almost broken...now it is stopping completely” etc.) Side coaching is an important part of the dramatic experience, and using it will take your students to new levels of performance as your expectations guide and encourage them to try new approaches onstage.

Making A Machine

strategy for curricular connections



social studies

- Ask students to make machines that depict major events in history, (e.g. a Civil War machine, a Magna Carta machine, a kingship machine)



science

- Have students make machines that demonstrate a scientific process, structure, or life cycle.



language arts

- Have students make a poetry machine with each “part” having one line or word



visual arts

- Have students create models of their machines, or collages that represent the machines themselves.



dance

- Have students “dance” their machines, using music of their choice in the background

ARTS • BASED SKILLS & STRATEGIES

Making A Machine

multiple intelligences target



verbal • linguistic



interpersonal



musical



visual • spatial



bodily • kinesthetic



intrapersonal

adaptations

to simplify

- Improvise machines instantly (on the count of five) rather than breaking into groups to plan.

to challenge

- Create a series of three linked machines. Practice smooth transitions between the machines. (Example: A conflict machine leading into a war machine leading into a peace machine). Photograph the machines and use the photos as a departure point into visual and art pattern designs and/or poetry and writing assignments.

special needs

- This activity is accessible for most learners.