

ARTS • BASED SKILLS & STRATEGIES

• middle school •
• elementary • • high school •

title **Mirroring**

skill



music



dance



theatre

about the strategy

One of the most accessible and popular theatre exercises is movement mirroring. Participants of all ages improve spatial awareness, muscle control, and fluidity of movement while broadening concentration and observation skills. Non-verbal communication skills are developed. Mirroring is a great way to bring quick focus into a class and is effective when used for transitions.

visual

Observing a partner's movements

auditory

Listening and responding to music

kinesthetic

Creating and copying movement

instructional steps

objective Students observe and copy the movements of a partner, in mirror fashion.

materials CD player and a recording of slow, peaceful music (i.e. Pachelbel's *Canon in D*, Bach's *Air on a G String*)

procedure

1. Modeling

- Position students so that they are facing you. Ask them to pretend that they are looking in a mirror and to copy you exactly.
- Begin moving with large, slow, movements. Gradually increase the level of difficulty by making movements smaller, faster, and more intricate. Include motions that are asymmetrical.
- Continue for several minutes, and end with several challenging movements.
- Ask students to describe how the mirroring changed and what made it get harder.

Mirroring

instructional steps

procedure

2. Working With a Partner

- Choose or assign partners for each student.
- Partners stand facing each other. One person begins by making slow, smooth movements of hands, arms, body, and facial expressions. The other partner mirrors these movements exactly.
- Move among the students and coach them to concentrate and focus on the movements without talking or laughing. Encourage them to use their surrounding space and to explore a variety of movements.
- Exchange the leadership regularly throughout the lesson. This can easily be done by using a pre-determined signal (i.e., "Switch leader/follower roles whenever I clap my hands.")
- Continue mirroring using recorded music in the background. Ask students to note how the music changes their movements.
- Vary the activity by limiting the different body parts used, for example, "Use only your arms." or "Now, just use your facial muscles."

Mirroring

strategy for curricular connections



mathematics

- Draw flips of geometric shapes. Relate to movement mirroring.
- Build structures using manipulatives that feature symmetry. Ask: where is the imaginary mirror in each structure?



language arts

- There are many traditional stories where one character copies another, for example, *Caps for Sale* or *The Japanese Mirror*. Use mirroring as a technique for exploring these stories.
- Explore the concept of a reversed world view in *Alice Through the Looking Glass* by Lewis Carroll. Carroll, who was a mathematician, incorporates many puzzles, challenges and jokes relating to mirror vision in the story.



visual arts

- Create pictures which are mirror images (symmetrical). A popular choice for this activity is butterflies. What is the difference between a copy and a mirror image?
- Create symmetrical images by fastening drawings or pictures to small mirrors at an appropriate angle.

ARTS • BASED SKILLS & STRATEGIES

Mirroring

multiple intelligences target



verbal • linguistic



interpersonal



musical



visual • spatial



bodily • kinesthetic



intrapersonal

adaptations

to simplify

- Perform seated cross-legged on the floor.
- Give specific verbal cues for movements, e.g., “Can you copy what my arms are doing?”

to challenge

- Reverse one partner and copy each other shadow style.
- Challenge students to make their movements so precise that it will be virtually impossible for an observer to tell who is the leader and who is the follower.

special needs

- Mirroring can be adapted for students with limited movement capabilities by simplifying the range and speed of movement.
- This is an accessible activity for ESL/ESD students because there is little use of language.
- This activity is usually very centering for students with attention difficulties, providing the partnerships are carefully chosen.