

# ARTS • BASED SKILLS & STRATEGIES

• pre-k • • middle school •  
• elementary • • high school •

title **Movement Variations**

skill



dance



theatre

about the strategy

Students observe and engage in movement patterns that range from naturalistic to stylized, creatively expanding on their abilities to communicate non-verbally and to explore new imaginative movement possibilities.

v i s u a l

Close observation of "real life" activity to be replicated, observation of classmates.

a u d i t o r y

Listening and responding to side coaching, (guided instruction), coordinating movements to music, collaborative discussion and sharing.

k i n e s t h e t i c

Physical movement, going from realistic mimetic replication to stylized, dance-like movement.

instructional steps

objective To encourage students to explore movement possibilities from naturalistic to stylized and to think in terms of physicalized metaphor.

materials Appropriate open space, (gymnasium, dance studio, classroom with desks pushed to the sides of the room).

procedure **1. Modeling**

- Have students wear clothing that is comfortable and easy to move in.
- Ask students to walk in a circle with at least an arms' length between them.
- Side coach students as they walk to pretend the conditions are changing, (e.g., it is sprinkling, then raining, then storming, it is getting warm, very hot, the ground is burning, they are walking through snow, high grass, there are snakes, they are walking a tightrope, there is six inches of peanut butter on the ground).
- Vary the pace of the walking, have students walk briskly, as if they are late for a meeting, then slow it down to the point of stopping the movement altogether.
- Ask the students to sit in a circle and discuss the variations they experienced through movement, the ways in which their bodies adapted to what their minds were "pretending", discuss the role of concentration in movement, along with imagination.

## Movement Variations

instructional steps

procedure

### 2. Applying

- Have students assist as you write ten every day activities on the board, (e.g. sweeping the floor, cleaning the sink, brushing your teeth, planting a seed).
- Ask students to either pick an activity from the board or think of one themselves to mime in a realistic manner, give them about five minutes to practice and encourage them to be as detailed in their depiction as possible.
- Have students share with the larger group their mime of an ordinary action.
- Have the entire group mime their activity, and begin to side coach them with comments that force them to take the movements into a new dimension, (e.g. the floor is moving up and down, you are standing on a water balloon, your arms are suddenly ten feet long, there is a fierce wind blowing)
- Ask students to once again sit in the circle and discuss what happens to realistic movements when they are exaggerated, and the meaning of stylized movement.
- Have students perform their mimetic movements starting from realistic depiction and going into stylization with various kinds of music playing, how does the music change and effect the movement?

## Movement Variations

strategy for curricular connections



social studies

- Pick a moment from history or an era being studied and start with the basic movement, taking it farther and farther into stylization until it becomes dance-like.  
Examples would be workers in Henry Ford's first assembly line, Anne Frank writing in her diary and realizing how the act of writing freed her imagination, the first Thanksgiving.



science

- Use the process to depict any scientific process, structure or life cycle.



language arts

- Start by depicting an important realistic moment in a character's life and take it to the next level using the process, (e.g. Romeo meets Juliet for the first time, Arthur pulls the sword from the stone, the Little Red Hen bakes her bread).

## ARTS • BASED SKILLS & STRATEGIES

### Movement Variations

multiple intelligences target



visual • spatial



bodily • kinesthetic



intrapersonal



musical

adaptations

to simplify

- Have students work as a group to mime specific activities “on the spot” with no preparation time, with the instructor calling out the activity.

to challenge

- Create a series of linked movement patterns based upon real life movements. Practice smooth transitions between movements. Have students think in terms of real life activities turning into choreographed dance as they work.

special needs

- This activity is accessible for most learners and may be adapted for students with movement limitations according to their levels of mobility.