

ARTS • BASED SKILLS & STRATEGIES

• middle school •
• elementary • • high school •

title **Object Improvisation**

skill



dance



theatre

about the strategy

Improvisation is a creative drama activity in which students make up dialogue on the spur of the moment. Using common objects to stimulate creative thinking, students utilize pantomime to communicate meaning, improvise dialogue, and create characters. With practice, students become more and more adept at improvising; they will surprise you with the innovative uses they can imagine for common objects.

visual

Observing objects and pantomime of others

kinesthetic

Manipulating objects and improvising pantomimed action

instructional steps

objective Students work in groups to present improvised skits inspired by everyday objects.

materials Props - a broad variety of everyday objects (i.e. walking stick, screwdriver, sock, broom, paintbrush, spoon, tennis racket, etc.)

procedure

1. Setting Criteria

- Share the criteria for the improvised scenes with students. The scene should have a beginning, a middle, and an end.

Beginning: who and where the characters are

Middle: complication, conflict, or problem

End: resolution of the issue

- Suggest that the teams use the objects in a variety of ways in their scene.

2. Improvising Scenes

- Have students choose partners (or choose partners for them).
- Each partner team chooses three objects and prepares a short scene (20 to 30 seconds) using pantomime and movement. The story lines are suggested by the objects and their uses.

Object Improvisation

instructional steps

procedure

- Allow time for the teams to brainstorm and plan. (Theatre specialists know that true improvisation is not rehearsed, but initially, your students may need some rehearsal. As long as the work is coming from their imaginations, it is improvisational enough.)

3. Extending

- Include dialogue.

strategy for curricular connections



language arts

- The process of learning narrative writing is enhanced by this kinesthetic activity. Students develop a deeper understanding of plot and conflict through improvisation as they focus on beginning, middle, and end in story development. Link to lessons on story structure.



social studies

- Objects from specific cultures or time periods make an excellent starting point for creative investigation through improvisation.



theatre

- Connect to acting/characterization, character analysis, pantomime, and movement.
- Use as a tool for script development.

ARTS • BASED SKILLS & STRATEGIES

Object Improvisation

multiple intelligences target



verbal • linguistic



interpersonal



visual • spatial



bodily • kinesthetic



intrapersonal

adaptations

to simplify

- Instead of preparing the scene in groups, try a simpler version of object improvisation. Pass a single object from one student to another; each student who receives it improvises a use for the object, perhaps accompanied by a line of dialogue, and then passes it on to another student.
- Improvise scenes using one object instead of three.

to challenge

- Improvise scenes on the spot, without preparation time.

special needs

- Pair students with a peer coach to help with movement or verbal/linguistic challenges. Allow extra preparation time.