



GUIDE
FOR STUDENTS AND
SCHOOL STAFF

YOUTH HEALTH

Class Activity, Behaviour Modification and Creativity

**Direction de l'adaptation scolaire
et des services complémentaires (DASSC)
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Introduction

Developed in cooperation with the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux and implemented in 1996 by the Ministère de l'Éducation, YOUTH HEALTH is designed to help schools become involved in a project to promote student health. The major activities focus on the following areas are: helping students take responsibility for their personal and social well-being; organizing activities for and with the entire education community, including students, school staff, parents, resource persons and community specialists; and using an intersectorial point of view when integrating the promotional approach into the activities. In order to do this, YOUTH HEALTH suggests that elementary and secondary schools adopt an approach that supports the education community. The program begins with a study of the school class as a group.

Teachers too often tend to believe that, since they have primary responsibility for the climate of the classroom, they must take on the entire responsibility for solving every problem that comes up. Teachers thus perpetuate the model of students as recipients whose role is to wait passively until the teacher finds solutions to their problems. More or less consciously, some teachers opt for a model of classroom conduct that removes the onus of responsibility from the students.

The model that YOUTH HEALTH proposes seeks to do the opposite. The person teaching is no longer seen as the only one responsible for the climate of the classroom. His or her role is to find ways to allow as many students as possible to help take responsibility for the dynamics of the classroom.

The document entitled *Youth Health – Quality of Life in the Classroom*¹ contains information that may help teachers play this role. Also discussed are phases of group development, means of creating and maintaining a climate of confidence as well as strategies to help students acquire and develop the skills needed to be able to function democratically.

This document focuses on what is required when students—particularly the members of the silent majority—are encouraged to help improve the quality of life in their classroom. First of all, four models of classroom conduct are described. Then the document deals with changes in habits and practices necessitated by the sharing of leadership with the students. This leads to a more specific discussion about behaviour modification and creativity. Finally, the document suggests means and activities that foster divergent thinking, risk-taking and perseverance.

1. Models of Classroom Conduct

Since there is no group without interaction and no interaction without repercussions, one cannot speak about classroom conduct without dealing with leadership. Starting with the extent of the influence that the teacher and the students have on the quality of classroom life, the document describes four models of group conduct.

1.1 Open Model

The students and the teacher share in improving the quality and organization of classroom life. All students regularly have an opportunity to express their point of view and to hear those of others (including the teacher's) on particular aspects of classroom

1. Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation. *Youth Health – Quality of Life in the Classroom*, 1997.

life: class rules, classroom arrangement, conflicts, celebrations, recreation, and the respect for class members. The students also have an opportunity to showcase their talents by helping carry out certain tasks such as classroom decoration and maintenance, management of materials and the organization of social or recreational activities.

Even though the students and the teacher share the leadership in classroom life, this does not mean that they exert the same level of influence. The teacher is and will remain the person who takes ultimate responsibility for classroom life, knowing nevertheless that creating a quality group atmosphere is possible only through a group effort.

1.2 Encyclopedic Model

Teachers assume the entire responsibility for improving the organization and quality of classroom life. Even if the students do not often have an opportunity to exert their influence on the organization and orientation of their classroom life, most do not usually complain. It is always reassuring to know that there is someone responsible who looks after everything, and who takes control of the situation.

1.3 Closed Model

Teachers and their students exert little influence on the organization and orientation of classroom life. In this model, the classroom teacher does not allow student teachers to take very many initiatives. This model is also applied when teachers must convince the students to respect the instructions issued by the principal's office, the school board or other sources.

1.4 Free Model

The students exert great influence on classroom life. This is what happens when the teacher loses control of the class. It may also happen when the teacher gives a group or a committee made up of student representatives responsibility for nominating students for awards or for organizing the Christmas party.

Each model has its usefulness. The choice will depend on the objectives to be attained and the work context. Since the goals of education are numerous and the means of fulfilling them quite diverse, usually all four models are used.

It would, however, be naïve to think that each model is used in the same way. Inevitably, one model takes precedence. Ken Heap points out that for most of us, the encyclopedic model is the predominant one, saying that most of us have been raised with the concept of a helping-helped relationship that manifests as an attitude of submission toward an omnipotent authority figure. He goes on to say that the traditional role of a person who needs help is to present the helping-expert a problem and wait passively for a solution. Conversely, he continues, the role of the person who helps is to study the situation and then provide the solution. This is what we all learned at school and what is reinforced every time we go to the doctor, to a lawyer, an architect, in short, to all those professionals whom we need to consult during the course of our lives.¹

The idea behind YOUTH HEALTH – having students take responsibility for the quality of their classroom life – implies a very different way of acting from that advocated in the encyclopedic model. YOUTH HEALTH favours the open model in which teachers, while remaining the

1. Ken Heap, *La pratique du travail social avec les groupes*, Éditions ESF, Paris, 1987, p. 27.

person wholly responsible for the climate of the classroom, encourage the students to take a leadership role in classroom life. This model calls upon both teachers and students to distance themselves from the tenets of the encyclopedic model.

2. Behaviour Modification and Creativity

As those who are familiar with YOUTH HEALTH know, we often use an analogy to describe four ways of behaving in a group. The four types of behaviour are known as *mouse*, *elephant*, *sheep* and *bird*.

- Mouse: this behaviour occurs when people are afraid to say what they think and when they allow others to dominate them. The mouse goes virtually unnoticed in a group, remaining hidden in the mousehole.
- Elephant: this behaviour occurs when people dominate and crush others. The elephant stands out in a group, sometimes even seeking to take up all of the space.
- Sheep: this behaviour occurs when people allow themselves to be easily influenced, when they intimidate others even if they know in their hearts that they do not totally agree with their actions. They usually tend to follow the elephants and thus, by extension, are noticed in a group.
- Bird: this behaviour occurs when people are not afraid to assert themselves, even if their words or actions are different from those of their friends. A bird knows how to take his or her place in a group without crushing or following the others.

Most of the time, we think of those who behave like elephants when we speak of improving the quality of classroom life.

These students are the only ones in question. In the classroom conduct model suggested by YOUTH HEALTH, all participants are encouraged to examine their behaviour.

Teachers are asked not to assume complete responsibility for the climate of the classroom, but rather to create conditions that encourage as many students as possible to take a leadership role in helping to organize classroom life. Students who behave like mice are encouraged to leave their mousehole and assert themselves more often. Those who behave like sheep are asked to demonstrate more independence and originality and to take a stand instead of following others. Students who behave like elephants are encouraged to respect the space of mice who leave their mousehole and sheep who leave the flock.

Behaviour modification is not easy. It is an area in which gimmicks and formulae — when they work — often do more harm than good. However, one thing is certain: there can be no talk of behaviour modification without taking creativity into account.

According to popular belief, creativity is reserved for a mysteriously chosen elite, and has nothing whatsoever to do with people's everyday behaviour. We forget that, as Morin et al point out¹, human beings create their own way of being in the world. This is the reason that a change in behaviour necessarily involves creativity.

It is not enough to tell someone what to do and to show him or her how to act for the person to change his or her behaviour. The new behaviour must be invented by the person in order for this person to adopt it. An observer may have seen this behaviour hundreds of times and, in the observer's eyes, it perhaps represents *stereotypes* or *clichés*. For the person who invents the new

1. Pierre Morin et al, "Recherche d'indices de créativité dans un contexte psychothérapeutique," *Revue québécoise de psychologie*, 3, 3, 1982.

behaviour, however, this new way of behaving in the world remains brand new.

To prevent our discussion on creativity from becoming too abstract, we shall describe the approach we take when dealing with students.

First of all, we suggest that the students participate in a theatrical improvisation activity. In teams, the students create short sketches based on themes such as: parent-child relationships, a fishing trip, improvisations, and vacations or any other. Along with the theme, the teams receive an object that they must use in their sketch. The object changes according to the theme and may be a Walkman, an empty jam jar, a tape measure or a toy shovel, among other things. We never name the objects; we number them and then give them to the students. The title used for giving the teams the instructions for the activity is as follows: *Improvisation on the theme of parent-child relationships with obligatory prop number one (Walkman)*.

At the end of the activity, we explain to the students that there are two kinds of imagination: imitative and creative. The former leads us to do as usual, to imitate or repeat what we know, while the latter leads us to do something different. Then we ask the students which kind of imagination was used by those who improvised the sketches: imitative or creative?

To help the students better answer the question, we encourage them to pay attention to the way of using the objects provided. We point out that, rather than naming the objects, we gave them numbers. We explain that our purpose in doing so was to leave the door open for the creative use of the objects, in other words, not to force the students to make customary use of the objects in their improvisation, but rather to allow the Walkman, for example, to become a stethoscope and the tape measure, a

telephone. In the light of this explanation, we ask the students if the objects were used in an imitative or creative manner, and why.

In most cases, the objects are used imitatively. The students claim that this is the case because it is much easier to do as usual than to create something new.

The imitative imagination and the creative imagination—which Guilford (as cited in Cloutier and Renaud)¹ calls *convergent and divergent thinking*—have a few common characteristics, in that they both "imply the generation of information and this information is a function of memory and new information sought by the subject."²) There are, however, very great differences between these two ways of thinking. While convergent thinking is the process of seeking a sole solution, divergent thinking tends toward the process of seeking many solutions. In the former, the world of the singular predominates, and in the latter, that of the plural.

Is it really easier, as the students say, to evolve in the world of convergent thinking rather than in that of divergent thinking? Since divergent thinking involves deviating from what is deeply ingrained in our internal structures,³ it is clear that creative imagination requires risk taking that differs from the conformity of convergent thinking. All evidence points to the fact that seeking ways of doing things in unusual ways also requires more patience and perseverance than the endless repetition of the same actions.

1. Richard Cloutier and André Renaud, *Psychologie du développement – Enfance, Guide d'études, Module 8: L'école, le jeu et la créativité*, Sainte-Foy, 1977.

2. Ibid., p. 58. (Free translation).

3. Adapted from André Paré, *Créativité et pédagogie ouverte, créativité et apprentissage*, II, Éditions NHP, 1977, p. 299.

YOUTH HEALTH proposes a method for improving the quality of classroom life in which it is not only the students behaving in the elephant mode who are required to change. In this method everyone is invited to leave behind behaviours inherited from the encyclopedic culture in favour of change. Since conformity and the security of convergent thinking are more immediately appealing than adventure and the uncertainty of change, making students responsible for their behaviour and for improving the quality of classroom life therefore poses a considerable challenge.

To meet this challenge, it is essential that, in our teaching practices, we include training in divergent thinking, encourage risk taking and value perseverance.

3. Divergent Thinking, Risk Taking and Perseverance

From the age of 8 or 9, many young people do not see themselves as creative beings. In their opinion, creativity is a gift they did not receive. Moreover, some tend to be fatalistic, saying that this is the way things are and that nothing or nobody can change anything.

According to Paré, we may come to believe that creativity is a gift, while in reality it represents the potential within every person. As with any function, creativity develops with use and our treatment of it may cause it to regress, or even disappear.¹ As we have seen, it is impossible to talk about behaviour modification without talking about creativity; training in divergent thinking thus seems to be an indispensable means of helping students take responsibility for their behaviour and the quality of classroom life.

3.1 Training in Divergent Thinking

Training in divergent thinking implies first of all that students be placed in a situation where they must solve problems. One way of satisfying this condition consists in holding discussions on classroom experience, as we have mentioned earlier.

Different types of forums are possible. At the elementary school level, teachers use the council of cooperation. William Glasser² speaks about class meetings. Some teachers, especially at the secondary school level, opt for less formal methods. They discuss problems with the students as they arise.

While it is true that the council of cooperation, class meetings and other methods provide opportunities for training students in divergent thinking, the mere fact of placing the students in a situation in which they must help to solve the problems of classroom life does not guarantee that the students will draw on their creativity. As we have seen, every person is naturally much more inclined to act as usual than to seek change. In order for the discussions on classroom experiences to become genuine creativity exercises, it is essential for the teacher to encourage the students to look beyond the usual solutions and to suggest many ways to improve the quality of classroom life.

To the extent that, according to Paré, every theory of creativity is necessarily a learning theory,³ training students in divergent thinking may also be compatible with certain teaching methods and strategies. According to Jean Beauté,⁴ the active methods based on the premise that knowledge is the result of learning, rather

1. Ibid., p. 80.

2. William Glasser, *Schools Without Failure*, New York: Harper Collins, 1975.

3. André Paré, 1977, p. 83.

4. Jean Beauté, *Les courants de la pédagogie contemporaine*, third edition, ÉRASME, 1997.

than something learned are part of divergent thinking. The same goes for project learning and the methods aimed at having students take responsibility for their learning.

Training in divergent thinking may also be given using exercises involving the development of creative abilities such as fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration. Each of these abilities may be defined as follows:

- Fluency: the ability to produce many elements. Depending on the nature of what must be produced, there may be fluency in words, ideas, expression and association;
- Flexibility: the ability to understand a problem or situation from different points of view. According to Paré, flexibility is the fight against conformity, stereotypes, the usual ways of working and looking at the world.¹
- Originality: the ability to produce ideas and solutions different from those suggested by others. Demonstrating originality means to avoid copying and showing off and to express one's personality in a genuine way;
- Elaboration: the ability to complement, add details, to embellish. It is the struggle to surpass oneself, pushing each thing one does farther than before.

As Paré stresses, we must avoid thinking that by having students do a few exercises in fluency or flexibility we are performing a work of creativity; he says that that would be akin to believing in the magical value of gimmicks.² To be viable, these exercises must be integrated into a way of seeing classroom conduct and learning that leaves

ample room for problem solving and where fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration consequently take root in day-to-day activities.

The simple creativity exercises in the Appendix deal with the development of the creative abilities mentioned earlier.

3.2 Encouraging Risk Taking

People cannot change their behaviour—come out of their shell instead of allowing themselves to be dominated, leave the herd instead of automatically following the others, or respect those who assert themselves instead of crushing them—without taking risks. According to Rollo May³, it takes courage to create. This is even more meaningful when the object being created is a person's way of being.

Indeed, the major obstacle to behaviour modification is still fear. If we want students to leave the safe haven of old habits and modify their way of being, it is necessary, in addition to training them in divergent thinking, for us to give them the courage and self-confidence required to make these changes.

In this perspective, establishing and maintaining a climate of confidence in a classroom become essential. Despite the fact that there is no magic recipe for this, it is obvious that elements such as the teacher's leadership skills, classroom rules, the recognition of students as individuals and a good sense of humour all play a key role in establishing a positive classroom ambience. (We have previously described the role of each of these elements in the document, *Youth Health - Quality of Life in the Classroom*).

1. J. Paré, p. 154 (Free translation).

2. J. Paré, p. 180 (Free translation).

3. Rollo May, *The Courage To Create*, Bantam Books, 1975.

We can also help students find the courage and confidence required for behaviour modification through improvisation activities. Since fiction offers an opportunity to be different without having to run as many risks as in real life, it can prove to be an excellent tool for exploring and creating new behaviours, and acquiring and developing social skills such as listening, self-assertiveness, empathy and self-control. Giving students an opportunity to improvise helps them to find or rediscover their identity, as Meirieux might say.¹

Like the creativity exercises discussed earlier, improvisation activities do not have any magic effect. To be useful, they must be integrated into a broader strategy of student responsibility with regard to their behaviour and the quality of classroom life. The improvisation activities in the Appendix can be integrated into such a strategy.

3.3 Valuing Perseverance

The creative imagination requires change based on patience and will.² Wishing to be different is not enough to change one's behaviour. This is a task that takes time and the unlearning of an old behaviour takes far more time than the learning of a new behaviour.

Thus, the idea of encouraging students who behave like mice to be more assertive, those who behave like sheep to be a little more independent and others who behave like elephants to be a little more democratic implies valuing perseverance.

Valuing perseverance means giving students the time to think. If students are asked to participate in solving a problem, we too

often hope that they will find a solution immediately. When this happens, according to Paré, we should not be surprised if the students always give the same type of answers, the ones they already know, the ones they have already seen.³

Creativity requires an incubation stage, a period where seemingly nothing is happening. At this point and for a fairly long period of time, the preconscious processes are being placed at the service of thought until new solutions appear. Paré gives the example of preparing for a trip or solving a problem. We state the situation, ask the students to think about it, look for ideas together, think about it again, and only then do we stand a chance of getting new and original ideas.⁴

Valuing perseverance also gives students the time and the opportunity to start over. In our consumer society, quantity counts for much more than quality. We go quickly from one thing to another without too much thought as to how to relate, improve or develop them. We have to admit that most of us regard the idea of starting over or the notion that practice makes perfect, as a waste of time.

And yet, the goals of creativity are to surpass, to improve, to perfect; these goals become viable only by dint of trying repeatedly and starting over.

Unfortunately, we give students very few opportunities to start over. After one or two fruitless tries at teamwork, we decree that from this point on classroom work will be done individually, not collectively. Working to acquire and develop social skills demands that we constantly remember the saying, *Education, thy name is patience.*

1. Philippe Meirieux, "Mais comment peut-on être adolescent?" *Pédagogie collégiale*, 6, 2, December 1992, p. 30.

2. Richard Cloutier and André Renaud, 1977, p. 57.

3. André Paré, 1977, p. 305. (Free translation)

4. André PARÉ, 1977, p. 306. (Free translation)

Valuing perseverance is finally placing more emphasis on process, on the approach, on progress than on the result. A method such as the one suggested in YOUTH HEALTH may be used to achieve a particular goal—for example, to encourage a shy student to open up. However, the overall objective should still be to set students in motion and keep them moving. Inertia sets in if the image we have given ourselves or the behaviour we have adopted is imprisoning us. What interests us in YOUTH HEALTH is change, that is, helping students re-examine their ability to create different ways of being in the world. For the rest, we trust them.

APPENDIX

CREATIVITY EXERCISES AND IMPROVISATION ACTIVITIES

ONE SHAPE, ONE THOUSAND IDEAS**Objectives**

- ◆ To think of many different ideas (fluency).
- ◆ To discuss means of increasing the number of ideas produced.

Materials

A blackboard or equivalent.

Duration

15 minutes.

Procedure

The teacher draws the following shape on the board:

Seated at their desks, students have 5 minutes to answer the following question: What does the shape on the board represent?

The objective of the exercise is to give as many answers as possible.

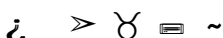
Taking turns, the students give the number of answers they have found and present the one they feel is most original, that is, the one which they think will not appear on the other students' lists. The teacher checks the originality of the answer by asking the other students if any of them have this answer on their list. To be acceptable, an answer must correspond approximately to the shape drawn on the board and be realistic and verifiable.

Conclusion

The teacher asks the students to explain how they went about finding answers to the question. If necessary, each student emphasizes that looking at the shape on the board from different points of view, including aerial, close-up and distant views, helps him or her to produce a variety of answers.

The teacher discusses with the students the importance of developing fluency with respect to ideas, or their ability to produce many ideas.

Note

The exercise may be repeated using different shapes, including these: 

SAME-LETTER SENTENCE**Objectives**

- ♦ To create many words.
- ♦ To explore various ways of producing ideas.

Materials

One sheet of paper and a pencil for each student.

Duration

20 minutes.

Procedure

Students must each write a sentence containing words that all begin with the letter *p*. Their sentence must be understandable and contain the greatest number of words possible. However, the same words cannot be used twice. One family name and one given name may be used.

The time allotted for the exercise is 10 minutes.

Example

Passing pretty Patricia Parkinson, parched Parisian pedestrians pacifically practised portrait photography.

Conclusion

Taking turns, the students present their sentence to the class. Then the teacher asks the students to say whether they think some sentences are more interesting than others, to identify which ones and to explain why.

The teacher also asks the students to explain how they went about writing their sentence and gives examples to demonstrate a few different ways to proceed, as follows:

- ♦ Begin immediately and write the sentence.
- ♦ Make a list of words beginning with the letter *p* and write the sentence based on this list.
- ♦ Write short series of three or four words and build a sentence gradually by adding other words to these series of words.

PUZZLE**Objectives**

- ◆ To exercise their fluency of expression.
- ◆ To discuss ways of stimulating their fluency of expression.

Materials

An exercise sheet (attached) and a pencil for each student.

Duration

45 minutes.

Procedure

Each student receives the attached exercise sheet and must use the 15 words on it in an original, understandable text.

The exercise is done individually and the time allotted for writing the text is 15 minutes.

Conclusion

The students take turns reading their texts to the class. Then the teacher asks the students to say whether they think some texts are more interesting than others, to identify which ones and to explain why.

Next, the teacher suggests that the students repeat the exercise, but this time, the 15 words must be used in a letter whose theme the students may decide on. Some examples might be as follows:

- ◆ Love letter
- ◆ Birthday party invitation
- ◆ Letter telling about a trip
- ◆ Letter of introduction to a correspondent in a foreign country;
- ◆ Advertising notice
- ◆ Stupid or insulting letter

Once the exercise is over, the students take turns reading their texts to the group. The teacher asks the students if the texts written during the second attempt are generally more interesting than they were on the first attempt and why.

The teacher discusses with the students how to find inspiration when they have to write a text.

PUZZLE (Exercise)**Instructions**

Use the following words in an original, understandable text. The order in which the words are used does not matter. You are not allowed to make any lists to use up words. As far as possible, try to keep your text short. Indicate the number of words or lines.

♦ Class	♦ Product	♦ Tortoise
♦ Storey	♦ Footbridge	♦ Appearance
♦ Elevator	♦ Box	♦ Pleasure
♦ Telephone	♦ Poverty	♦ Running shoe
♦ Key	♦ Creativity	♦ Pipe

DRAW ME A PICTURE**Objectives**

- ◆ To exercise their ability to develop and perfect an idea.
- ◆ To discuss the importance of developing their ability to improve and perfect an idea.

Materials

An exercise sheet (attached) and a pencil for each student.

Duration

20 minutes.

Procedure

Each student receives a copy of the attached exercise sheet.

Starting with the shape on the exercise sheet, the students must draw a picture of their own choosing. It can be an object, person, animal, scene, etc.

The exercise is done individually. Students may add as many elements as they like to the initial shape. The time allotted for the exercise is 5 minutes.

Conclusion

The students take turns presenting their drawings to the group. Then the teacher asks the students to say whether they think that some drawings are more interesting than others, to identify which ones and to explain why.

The teacher also asks the students if most of the drawings were created by adding a few or many elements to the initial shape and to explain their answer.

Emphasizing that originality often depends on a well-placed tiny detail, the teacher asks the students to repeat the exercise, this time producing a drawing by adding a minimum of elements to the initial shape. The time allotted is 10 minutes.

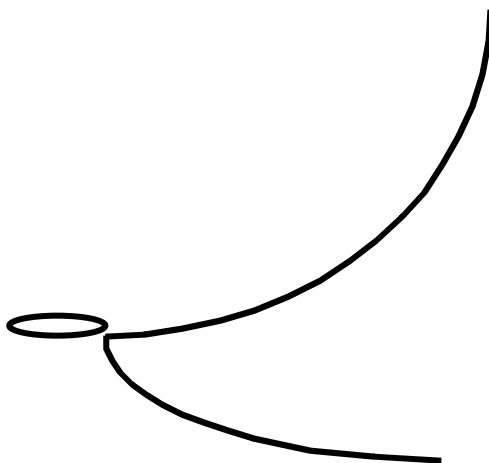
At the end of this time period, the students take turns presenting their drawings to the group. The teacher asks the students if they think that the drawings produced during the second try are generally more interesting and more original than those produced during the first try. The students must justify their answers.

The teacher discusses with the students the importance of developing their ability to improve or perfect an idea.

DRAW ME A PICTURE (First Try)

Instructions

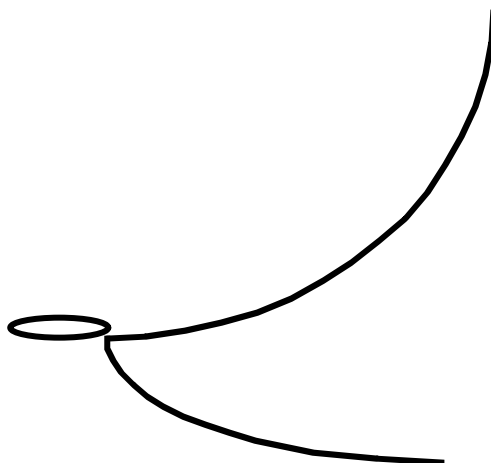
Using the shape drawn below, draw a picture by adding any other elements you like.



DRAW ME A PICTURE (Second Try)

Instructions

Using the shape drawn below, make a picture by adding as few elements as you can.



THE MAGIC LAMP

Objectives

- ◆ To exercise their intellectual flexibility.
- ◆ To identify the major obstacles to creative expression.

Materials

A desk and a flashlight.

Duration

From 20 to 35 minutes.

Procedure

The students are seated in a semi-circle. In the centre of the open part of the semi-circle, a flashlight is placed on a desk.

The teacher claps to signal the beginning of the game. Immediately, the student at the right end of the semi-circle stands up and goes behind the desk facing the others. The student then improvises a situation using the flashlight in an unusual way.

Example

The student pretends to shave, using the flashlight as a razor.

No talking is allowed. If the students wishes, he or she may make certain noises. The student continues the game until the teacher claps once again.

After the signal, the student returns to his or her chair and the next student goes to the desk. This student improvises a situation using the flashlight in an unusual way.

Example

The student sings using the flashlight as a microphone.

The flashlight cannot be used twice in the same way. The student may not talk during the improvisation, but he or she may make certain sounds.

The exercise ends at the discretion of the teacher, after all of the students have had one, two or three turns at improvising.

Conclusion

The teacher asks the students to say whether they think some improvisations were more interesting than others and to explain why. The teacher also asks them whether they found some students' presentations surprising and if so, why.

The teacher asks the students if they think that some students had more problems than others with this exercise and why. The teacher works with the students to draw up a list of obstacles to creative expression, such as shyness, nervousness or a lack of concentration, and discusses with them ways to overcome these obstacles.

SENDER-RECEIVER

Objectives

- ◆ To exercise their ability to listen.
- ◆ To exercise their ability to create and develop an idea.

Materials

None.

Duration

20 minutes.

Procedure

The students are seated in two rows facing each other. As soon as the teacher claps, the student in the first seat in the right-hand row stands, takes a few steps toward the student opposite and says anything he or she likes.

Example

Michael, come and have supper!

The student opposite in the left-hand row stands and answers.

Example

Gayle, I've told you before, I can't stand your shepherd's pie!

The teacher claps. The two students immediately return to their seats. The student in the second seat in the right-hand row stands and walks toward the student opposite, saying anything he or she likes.

Example

What time is it, please?

The student in the second seat in the left-hand row stands and answers.

Example

My watch! Somebody stole my watch! Police! Police!

The teacher claps again, thus signalling that these students should return to their seats, and a third pair should replace them. The procedure is repeated in this way until all of the students have had a turn. Then the activity is repeated, but this time, starting with the left-hand row.

Conclusion

The teacher asks the students to say whether they think some improvisations were more interesting than others, to identify which ones and to explain why. The teacher also asks them whether they found some students' presentations surprising and if so, why.

The teacher explains to the students that they had to do the exercise twice in order to experience the role of sender (the first student to speak) and receiver (the student who responded). The teacher asks the students to name the skills or qualities required for the sender and receiver roles.

The teacher stresses the fact that, in order to be a good listener, people must know how to listen and be able to develop the idea introduced by the other person. The teacher asks the students if they think that listening and the ability to create, supplement and broaden an idea are qualities that are useful in everyday life and if so, why.

The teacher discusses with the students the methods and tricks used by each student to develop his or her ability to listen.

ACTION-REACTION**Objectives**

- ◆ To exercise their ability to listen.
- ◆ To exercise their ability to create and develop an idea.

Materials

A chair.

Duration

20 minutes.

Procedure

The students are seated in two rows facing each other. An extra chair is placed at the centre of one of the ends of the passageway between the two rows. This chair is placed so that when a student sits in it, he or she sees the other students from the side.

When the teacher claps once, the student in the first seat of the right-hand row stands and goes to the extra chair. Once there, he or she performs an action. Speaking is not allowed. If the student so wishes, he or she may, however, make certain sounds. The student must use the chair and keep performing until the teacher claps once again.

Example

The student sits down and pretends to be fishing.

As soon as the student begins to perform, the teacher shouts *REACTION*. The student in the first seat in the left-hand row stands and goes to perform with the first student. As before, the student must not talk, but may make certain sounds. The second student's action must complement, develop or improve upon that of the first student. However, the use of the chair is not compulsory for the second student, who must continue performing until the teacher claps.

Example

The student moves in front of the chair, pretending to be a fish.

As soon as the student begins performing, the teacher claps. Immediately, these students return to their chairs. The student in the second seat of the right-hand row stands, goes toward the chair, and, following the instructions described above, performs an action of his or her choice.

Exercise 7 (cont.)

Example

The student lays down under the chair and pretends to be a dog in its dog house.

As soon as the student has begun performing, the teacher shouts *REACTION*. The student in the second seat in the left-hand row stands immediately and comes to develop the action in progress.

Example

The student imitates a dog pound employee looking for runaway dogs.

Once again, the teacher claps and these students return to their seats. The exercise continues in this way until all of the students have had a turn. Once this is done, the exercise is repeated, starting with the left-hand row.

Conclusion

The teacher asks the students to say whether they think some improvisations were more interesting than others, to identify which ones and to explain why. The teacher also asks them whether they found some students' presentations surprising and if so, why.

The teacher also asks the group how and why the students had to demonstrate their ability to listen even if they were not allowed to speak in this exercise. The teacher asks the students to identify some obstacles to good listening and discusses with them ways to overcome them.

AN ACTOR

Objectives

- ♦ To exercise their ability to be different and act differently.
- ♦ To discuss the requirements for a change in behaviour.

Materials

Two chairs.

Duration

50 minutes.

Procedure

Each student has 10 minutes to prepare a sketch in which he or she is the only actor impersonating two characters. The only accessories permitted, but not compulsory, are two chairs. The sketch must be no more than 45 seconds long and feature two characters of different, even opposite personalities.

Example

- ♦ Shyness and extrovertedness
- ♦ Aggression and pacifism
- ♦ Domination and subordination
- ♦ Calm and agitation

When the time allotted for preparation is over, the students sit in a semi-circle. The two chairs permitted as accessories are then placed in the centre of the open end of the semi-circle.

The students take turns presenting their sketch, starting from the right. The teacher ensures that the sketches do not exceed the maximum allotted time of 45 seconds. After 35 seconds of acting, the teacher advises the actor that there are only 10 seconds left. After this time is up, the teacher claps, indicating that the performing student should return to his or her place and that the next student can begin.

Conclusion

The teacher asks the students to say which sketches they thought were the most interesting and why. The teacher also asks them whether they found some students' sketches surprising and if so, why.

Exercise 8 (cont.)

Still referring to the same exercise, the teacher explains to the students how the theatre enables actors to change their behaviour and even adopt two different behaviours at the same time, as we saw in the preceding example. The teacher also asks the students whether they think it is possible in everyday life for people to change their behaviour, for a shy person to become extroverted or an aggressive individual to become peaceable. The teacher then asks the students if these changes in behaviour are more difficult to carry out in life than in the theatre and why.

The teacher asks the students to identify the students whom they feel have improved their behaviour since the beginning of the year. The teacher further explains the situation through examples of improvement such as being more self-assertive (less shy), showing more independence, being less easily influenced, having more tolerance, complaining less, being calmer and less agitated. The teacher questions the students in this manner to find out if they had to find special methods to improve their behaviour and, if so, which ones.

**THEATRE-FORUM
(MOUSE, ELEPHANT, BIRD)**

Objectives

- ◆ To distinguish between three types of behaviour.
- ◆ To discuss the requirements of a change in behaviour.

Materials

A chair.

Duration

30 minutes.

STEP 1

Procedure

The students are seated in a semi-circle. The teacher tells them that some students will be invited to act in short improvised sketches. The teacher also explains that the students who participate in the sketches will have to adopt *mouse*, *bird* or *elephant* behaviour and, if necessary, repeats the definition of each of these behaviours.

Mouse

Mouse behaviour occurs when people are afraid to say what they think and when they allow others to dominate them. The mouse goes virtually unnoticed in a group, remaining hidden in the mousehole.

Elephant

Elephant behaviour occurs when people dominate and crush others. The elephant stands out in a group, sometimes even seeking to take up all of the space.

Bird

Bird behaviour occurs when people are not afraid to assert themselves even if their words and actions are different from those of their friends. A bird knows how to take his or her place in a group without crushing or following the others.

Exercise 9 (cont.)

The teacher places a chair in the open space left by the semi-circle and chooses a student to sit in it. The teacher explains that, in the improvisation entitled *This is My Chair*, the student will have to behave like a mouse. The teacher chooses another student to behave like an elephant who has to claim the chair in which the mouse is sitting.

The improvisation begins and ends when the teacher claps. When the signal to begin is given, the elephant approaches the mouse and claims the chair he or she is sitting in. Pushing is not permitted and the chair cannot be moved.

At the end of the improvisation, the teacher asks if the group thinks the performing students played their respective roles well and why. If necessary, the teacher can repeat the improvisation with the same students or choose others.

Once the students have succeeded in describing the elephant-mouse relationship in a realistic fashion, the teacher asks them to improvise once again. The theme of the improvisation will remain *This is My Chair*, but this time the student who played the part of the mouse must now behave like a bird. The student who played the part of the elephant reprises the role.

At the end of the improvisation, the teacher asks if the group thinks the students played their respective roles well and why. If necessary, the teacher can repeat the improvisation with the same students or choose others.

Conclusion

The teacher asks the student who played the role of elephant to say whether the mouse or the bird was easiest for an elephant to act with, given that the elephant dominates and crushes others, and to explain why.

The teacher then asks the student who played the role of the mouse and then that of the bird to indicate which of the two roles was the most demanding and why. The teacher also asks the other members of the class if they agree and why.

If necessary, the teacher tells the students that behaving like a bird, being assertive and earning respect, usually requires more courage than allowing ourselves to be dominated by others.

STEP 2

Procedure

The teacher explains that the improvisation will be repeated, but this time two elephants will have the starring roles. The teacher chooses two students. Student 1 must sit on the chair at the open end of the semi-circle. Student 2 must wait for the starting signal before approaching Student 1 and claiming the chair.

At the end of the improvisation, the teacher asks if the group thought the two students played their respective elephant roles well. If necessary, the teacher may repeat the improvisation with the same students or choose others.

When the students have succeeded in describing the elephant-elephant relationship in a realistic fashion, the teacher tells them that they will have to repeat the improvisation, but this time the student on the chair at the beginning of the play will have to behave like a bird. The other student continues playing the elephant role.

At the end of the improvisation, the teacher asks if the group thought the students played their respective roles well and why. If necessary, the teacher may repeat the improvisation with the same students or choose others.

Conclusion

The teacher asks the students to explain, in the light of the improvisations just performed, what distinguishes elephant behaviour from bird behaviour.

If necessary, the teacher tells the students that people behaving like birds control their emotions better and use more humour than people who behave like elephants.

The teacher discusses with the students the methods or tricks each student uses to keep his or her behaviour under control.

BOMBARDMENT**Objectives**

- ♦ To exercise their ability to listen.
- ♦ To exercise their ability to create and develop an idea.

Materials

None.

Duration

30 minutes.

Procedure

The students are seated on chairs in a circle. The teacher asks a student to stand at the centre of the circle. This student's role will be to respond to remarks addressed to him or her by the other students.

After naming another student, the teacher claps to signal the beginning of the exercise. The designated student immediately stands, takes a few steps toward the person standing in the centre of the circle and addresses a remark to him or her.

Example

Stay calm, Roger; just, stay calm!

Immediately, the student in the centre of the circle responds.

Example

What's happening now? I suppose the toilet's overflowing!

The teacher claps and the student who started the exercise immediately returns to his or her seat and the next student to the right stands up, takes a few steps toward the person in the centre of the circle and quickly addresses a remark to him or her.

Example

Good afternoon, Sir. Would you like to buy a chocolate bar to help finance my school's activities?

The student in the centre of the circle immediately responds.



Exercise 10 (cont.)

Example

Listen to me, son. You're the eighth one who's asked me that in the last half-hour. I don't eat chocolate. Is that clear? I do not eat it!

The teacher claps again. The student who has just spoken to the student in the centre of the circle returns to his or her place and the next person to the right stands to repeat the exercise.

The activity continues in this manner until all of the students have spoken once to the student in the centre of the circle. Then, another student goes to the centre of the circle and the activity begins again. The teacher stops the activity when three different students have stood in the centre of the circle.

Conclusion

The teacher asks the class to do the following:

- ◆ Explain the differences they have observed in the behaviour of the students asked to stand in the centre of the circle. If necessary, the teacher gives examples of behaviour: looked at those who spoke to them or averted their eyes; varied the timbre and volume of their voice or spoke in a monotone; waited quite a while to answer or answered immediately; and took a few steps or stood still.
- ◆ Indicate the skills or qualities that the students standing in the centre of the circle had to demonstrate.
- ◆ From among those students asked to stand in the centre of the circle, name the one whom they think performed best and explain why;
- ◆ Draw up a list of tips to give to the students who had to stand in the centre of the circle in order to help them improve their presentation.

INTIMIDATION**Objectives**

- ◆ To practise their self-defense skills.
- ◆ To discuss ways to react to intimidation.

Materials

A wallet and five chairs.

Duration

25 minutes.

Procedure

The students are seated on chairs in such a way that they can see the five chairs at the front of the class. The first four chairs mark the four corners of a square. The fifth chair is placed in the centre of the square.

The teacher chooses five students and designates one to play the role of Michael, who is given the wallet. Michael is seated on the chair in the centre of the square. He must defend himself against the other four students who try to intimidate him. Seated on the four outer chairs, these students threaten to beat Michael if he does not hand over the contents of his wallet. No pushing is allowed and Michael's wallet may not forcibly be taken from him.

The teacher designates one of the four students to begin the activity. The teacher claps to signal the beginning of the activity. Immediately the student stands, approaches Michael and starts to intimidate him in order to obtain the contents of his wallet. Michael defends himself. The student continues to harrass Michael.

After four or five lines of dialogue, the teacher again claps. Immediately, the student performing with Michael returns to his or her seat and the next student to the right stands up. The student now performing continues where the first student left off, continuing to harrass Michael to obtain the contents of his wallet. Michael defends himself.

After another four or five lines of dialogue, the teacher claps again. The student performing with Michael immediately returns to his or her seat and the next student to the right takes over.

The activity continues until the four students have had an opportunity to confront Michael at least twice. Then, another student is asked to replace the person playing the role of Michael and another four students are chosen to confront the one in the centre. The procedure is repeated until three other students have had the opportunity to play the role of Michael.

Conclusion

The teacher asks the students who played the role of Michael to describe the major problems they experienced.

The teacher asks the students to do the following:

- ◆ Explain the differences they observed in the behaviour of the students who played the role of Michael. To clarify the question, the teacher gives examples of behaviour: looked at those who spoke to them or averted their eyes; made different arguments or often repeated the same ones; varied the timbre and volume of their voice or spoke in a monotone.
- ◆ From among those students who played the role of Michael, name the one who best defended himself or herself and explain why.
- ◆ Indicate if some students have ever found themselves in a situation similar to Michael's; if so, the teacher asks them each to describe this situation and the reaction of the student in question.
- ◆ State whether certain strategies, used by the students who played the role of Michael, could also be used in life situations to fight intimidation. The teacher asks them to list the strategies and explain why.
- ◆ Give advice to the students who played the role of Michael in order to help them improve their ability to defend themselves.

ANGER**Objectives**

- ◆ To demonstrate various ways of expressing anger.
- ◆ To discuss ways to control their anger.

Materials

A chair, a desk and a telephone.

Duration

30 minutes.

Procedure

The teacher chooses three students and asks the first two to leave the classroom and wait in the hall.

When the two students have left, the teacher explains to the student in the classroom that he or she must improvise a 30-second sketch on anger. When performing, the student may use the following accessories: a chair, a desk and a telephone. The teacher stresses that the objective of the improvisation is to demonstrate realistically the behaviour of an angry person.

The teacher gives the student one minute to prepare. Then the teacher claps to signal the beginning of the activity.

Once the improvisation is over, the teacher asks one of the two students waiting in the hall to enter the classroom. The teacher explains how the activity works, gives him or her one minute to prepare, and claps to begin the exercise. The same procedure is repeated with the third student.

Conclusion

The teacher asks the students to do the following:

- ◆ Tell whether or not they thought the illustrations of anger presented by the three students were realistic. The teacher asks the students whether or not anger in everyday situations is expressed by reactions similar to those presented;

Exercise 12 (cont.)

- ◆ Explain the differences in each student's illustration of anger. To clarify the question, the teacher gives examples of some differences in the behaviour presented, including the volume of the voice, movement, gestures, silence and facial expressions.
- ◆ Say whether the anger demonstrated by each student was or was not controlled and explain why;
- ◆ Describe ways to control anger.

The same exercise may be repeated by asking the students to express another emotion such as excitement, shyness or fear.