

LINE UP DRILL

Notes: I invented this game several years ago after working with a teacher who would yell at her students to have them line up at the door for lunch by counting to five at the top of her lungs. The group would often panic around three and push to get into place, and inevitably one person would get shoved into a desk or trip over someone else's foot. I decided to slow the count down, save my voice by using a musical instrument (instead of yelling), and challenge them into organizing themselves creatively while getting in line. It has become one of my favorite ways to help students develop self-discipline and a sense of personal time management. It's more challenging than one might expect – and great exercise for increasing creativity and cooperation!

Object of the Game: To work cooperatively as a group, without a leader, to form a designated shape in the room, without talking, within a chosen time frame.

Recommended for: Groups in Grades K – Adult.

Time Needed: 20-30 minutes

Room set up: A cleared space with room for group to stand in a large circle.

Materials Needed: None

Skills Development: Concentration, Listening, Non-verbal Communication, Self-control, Spatial Awareness, Physical discipline, Team building

How To Play:

Establish with the group that you will be giving them a series of challenges: to sit, stand and/or get into certain specified shapes in the room within a designated amount of time. Their job is to accomplish this task silently (without discussion), independently (they can not direct anyone in the room), and within the allotted time.

First, ask the group to go from sitting to standing to the SLOW count of 8. I use a shakeree (a West African rattle) to keep a rhythm and I quietly count along with the beat. The instrument establishes a rhythmic beat to the count and adds an important artistic aesthetic to the activity.

Explain that you'd like them to fill the entire 8 seconds with movement – that they should not be standing on 3, nor still sitting on 6. You are asking them to produce

Excerpted from: ACTIVELY ENGAGED – Theater arts as a Dynamic teaching Tool in the Classroom

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a controlled motion rise with continual movement. Demonstrate what the process of rising to the count of 8 might look like.

Practice this standing to a beat task a few times with them. Look for accuracy and efficiency. Discuss the process. Ask them how they did. Were they able to establish a continual motion movement effect? Were they in control of their bodies in time and space? Could they have been more accurate?

Try it again. This time change up the time. Try a controlled rise to the count of 12. Try it to the count of 4. Once they have effectively mastered the timed motion rise, ask them to move into a circle in a timed motion walk, to the count of 10. Next, ask them to form two parallel lines to the count of 6. (This is a wonderful opportunity to explore geometric shapes.)

Remind the group that there is no director or leader. Explain that you are looking for them to manage themselves and be responsible for their own time WHILE they collaboratively accomplish a task. They should be able to arrive on time- not too early and not too late.

Next, ask them to form a capital T to the count of 8. (Orient them to the spaced by suggesting where the top horizontal line is and where the vertical line is.) Once in place, ask them to notice the shape of the letter they formed and give them another 5 seconds if they need to make adjustments! After completing a few letters, ask them to create a Slithering Snake

State where head and tail should be to get everyone on the page. At this point, let them know the total amount of time they'll be given, i.e.15 seconds, but explain that they can arrive as early as 10 seconds to enable others to find where they are needed to complete the task.

This is an important refinement. You are asking them to see the whole shape and find where they are needed to complete it. Try a landscape form -- a volcano or waterfall. Give them to the count of 20. When moving into complex shapes such as a waterfall, take extra time to set up the scene with them. I actually walk through the landscape for them, showing them where the imaginary waterfall is, with rocks and boulders along the edge, and a pool of water at the bottom, with trees and bushes and a stream moving out from the pool. Then I set them to the task of creating it.

At the end, ask them to freeze their bodies and look around – take the time to notice what they created.

Be sure to save time at the end of the exercise to discuss the activity.

What was most challenging for them?

What did you need to be able to do to succeed at making the shapes?

Can you describe the moment when you saw where you were needed and got the idea of what shape to add on to or create?

ARTS INTEGRATION EXTENSIONS:

Geometry: Parallel lines, rectangles, parallelograms, isosceles triangles, concave or convex semi-circles, concentric circles, etc.

Earth Science: Ask students to form the earth with the CORE, MANTLE and CRUST. Ask students to show the process of SUBDUCTION in slow motion, as the oceanic plate subducts beneath the lighter continental plates.

Social Studies: Ask students to create an image of the Boston Tea Party, with students portraying characters in frozen action such as colonists, India East Tea Company representatives, town's folk, British Parliament representatives, etc.

With these arts integration extension activities, discuss the content information with your students and have the students enact the event. You can narrate for them to move to, or have them improvise short scenes from an event. In this way, you will see what they comprehend and the enactment will be an authentic assessment of their content knowledge.