

Open Your Class With This Tomorrow

If I Understood You, Would I Have This Look on My Face? My Adventures in the Art and Science of Relating and Communicating

To emphasize the pros and cons of communication have your students play two quick games. The first game enhances communication, while the second game prohibits communication.

Game 1: Enhancing Communication- Tossing Balls and Emotions

Use your powers of observation to communicate with your peers by playing this fun game. Students need to keep the game moving forward, not cut the flow, and build on what others offer. These skills are often enhanced in theater games used for improvisation and can build empathy.

Directions:

1. Circle up as a class.
2. Toss an imaginary ball to a student.
3. They must catch that same sized imaginary ball and then pass it along to another student. Students must use the power of observation to catch and release the imaginary ball.
4. Next, have students toss an emotion. This may be challenging for them at first. You may need to get them started by making a sound and gesture that represents a sense of joy and tossing it to a student.
5. Next, have students accept an emotion and morph it into another one before moving it along. This requires students to receive an emotion, copy it, and allow it to turn into a completely different feeling.

Game 2: Prohibiting Communication- Curse of Knowledge

This activity is based on an experiment conducted in 1990 by Stanford University student Elizabeth Newton. The original experiment had 120 songs and participants only correctly guessed three songs, for a 2.5% accuracy rate. The predicted success rate was 50%.

Directions:

1. Split the class into two groups: tappers and listeners.
2. Have the tappers secretly decide on a well-known song, such as Happy Birthday, that they will share with the listener.
3. The point of the game is to have the listener correctly guess the song, but the tapper cannot hum or recite the words. They can only tap.
4. Before starting the game have students guess how often the listeners will be able to correctly identify the song.

