

NEW APPROACHES, ACTIVITIES, USE OF CREATIVITY In-School Prevention

Pirate story – used similarly to the “alien” story. This image came up spontaneously as the class, in a line, moved from one end of the room to the other. The imagery was breathing and releasing the breath with a ‘whoosh’ and a wave image resulted; being swept ashore by a wave emerged; a community dance with sculpture making followed in celebration of landing on an island. Here creativity went wild and we were met by pirates.

At this point the adults – classroom teacher, student teacher, 3 volunteers, and me separated to become the pirates. I eventually separated myself in order to ask questions to further the story, or narrate to inspire creativity and images, often using ‘stop action’ technique. Besides I was simply flying by the seat of my pants!

Students and pirates needed to discover one another.

Using props, living quarters and a school that was built with help of pirates.

A feast was shared.

Scarves were used to designate houses and students separated into small groups of 2-4 to live with one another. (Maybe the teacher helped with selecting who would be together, OR we counted off and the 1’s, 2’s, etc. lived together.)

Promoted was living peacefully with others; sharing, problem-solving, group decision-making, building of an idea, including everyone, self and body control, handling disappointment,

“Show off day” if circumstances forced us to hold class in the classroom. Helped with transitions; still use of movement; ‘showed off’ skills learned and tried them out in the classroom. ALSO – if class was a bit distracted this served as a challenge to stay on task- this term seemed to attract them; if by chance an adult happen to walk into the room I used this term at times - “let’s show off to Ms. So & So how we can....”

Rainbow space concept --- taken from a visual aid used for a long-ago client. Basically each color depicts a different space category ex: personal space, close hug, far away hug, stranger, etc.

Random Kindness - I encouraged people to do appropriate actions during “Random Acts of Kindness Week” held during Feb. 11-17 2008 (around Valentine’s Day)

Valentine’s Day – opened discussion of ‘what is in your heart?’ This developed into seeing the heart as a bank; when we give good feelings to others through words and actions and smiles, we fill up their bank; the act of giving also fills our own “heart banks.” “How can you make someone’s heart feel good?”

I requested the kids to write down acts of kindness they did that week and leave them in my mailbox. This was viewed as a great idea! but no one responded. I continued the idea of leaving things in my mailbox, but not much follow through. Still worthwhile though!

One of the classrooms was inspired from this to make their own “Wall of kindness” and it listed things students did as kindness’.

Balloon - Anger—blow up the imaginary balloon as a visual aid for getting angry. The balloon gets bigger, tighter, ready to explode. What are our choices? What happens when we breathe, let go, etc.---deflates.

Museum game---feelings, toys, etc. Magic garden used also – different trees, flowers, etc., even anything else found in a garden/forest; creepy forest; See new handout on Go and Stop and Museum Variations in this category

Scarves – during movement warm-up to flowing music, I pass out scarves based on appropriate participation – meaning “I come to you, don’t come to me to get a scarf”; We use them with the music and then I introduce trading without verbal communication; You must trade the scarf – what is that like to give up a color you like, etc. How did you know that person wanted to trade, how did you let someone know you wanted to trade; I also had the scarf bag in circulation as it wasn’t as desirable and explored what that was like. Also brought up issue of laughing at someone who had a certain color scarf; Worked well on so many levels.

Scarves, cont. – Used in mirroring – helped to connect the dynamics between partners; “I felt like a clone!” When the activity was done, the pair could find a way to sit together on the scarf like a picnic blanket (the big ones!); when finished they needed to find a way together to bring it to me as if they were carrying a treasure.

Chimes (you may do this already) Stay quiet as long as chime sound lasts; breathe in and release breath as long as sound lasts;

For unpredictable, highly distractible classrooms I experimented with a few things: Leading “follow the leader” style into the room and eventually into circle. When they crossed the ‘magic threshold’ they were to begin skipping, tiptoeing, etc. Some classes needed to move immediately in a warm-up before coming together in a circle; some (coming from gym or recess) needed a brief relaxation time before moving on;

Popcorn – microwave heats up, kernels begin popping, and when the corn is done all the kernels have stopped moving. They need salt and butter which is a hands on opportunity to lightly touch their heads and backs in relaxation pose.

Space and People Watching: One class was given the assignment to ‘people watch’ through the week between our class meetings; actually it was to observe people’s use of space – how much did they see appropriate use, pushing, cutting off, etc. Responses verbal in categories of “A lot”, “sometimes” hardly ever” and if they noticed people’s ‘lack of awareness – not paying attention’ or was it more intentional?

Awareness of self-control and power: I found that a visual aid is helpful when talking about giving your power, self-control, energy control, ‘away’ to someone else – peer or teacher. I used a roll of tape or whatever was handy to hold to center of my body. When I lost control of self, I gave the roll of tape to someone else. Helpful when have a substitute teacher (they gave all of their control to the absent teacher), when discussing being bullied, name-called, etc.
