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Why Use Learning Stations?

After teaching year one for eight years, I decided that I needed a significant change of year levels. So I accepted a position teaching year seven and eight reading at a local middle years school. Because I was the new teacher, I had to travel from classroom to classroom with a trolley laden with all my supplies. My status as a roaming teacher and my naiveté about teaching adolescents led me to start with a traditional teaching style. I lectured about each topic while my students took notes and then completed worksheets. While I attempted to implement some games, cooperative learning and readers' workshops, I had quite limited success in these endeavours and became frustrated with my students' lethargic behaviour and indifferent attitudes. Behaviour management—or shall I just say discipline—became a troublesome task. Had I made a wrong decision changing from year one to middle years?

While struggling through that first year, I reflected often upon the differences between middle years students and year ones. It had been relatively easy to motivate young children and establish a successful classroom management program. Why was I struggling so much with this new age group? In search of answers, I read books such as Pipher's (1994) *Reviving Ophelia*, Atwell's (1998) *In the Middle: New Understandings About Writing, Reading, and Learning*, numerous journal articles and National Middle School Association's position statement *This We Believe* (2003). I learned about adolescents' unique status of being "in the middle of everything . . . especially in the middle of changes—emotional, physical, psychological, and intellectual" (Atwell, p. 55). It is during this middle stage that they "undergo more rapid and profound personal changes between the ages of 10 and 15 than at any other time in their lives" (National Middle School Association, 2010, p. 5).

Art station: Guess my artwork

Learning goal:

Students select and use the qualities of structures and functions of art to improve communication of their ideas. (Consortium of National Arts Education, 1994)

This station is based upon the game *Guess Who* (explained in the Directions Handout, p. 31), in which one player secretly chooses a character from among a number of given choices. His opponent asks a series of *yes* or *no* questions to eliminate possibilities until the opponent can guess the first player's chosen character. Rather than using characters and their traits, this station uses teacher-selected artwork and focuses the students on specific artistic elements. This station can be used throughout the year by changing the vocabulary terms on the student handout and the artwork on the playing cards to match content under study at the time.

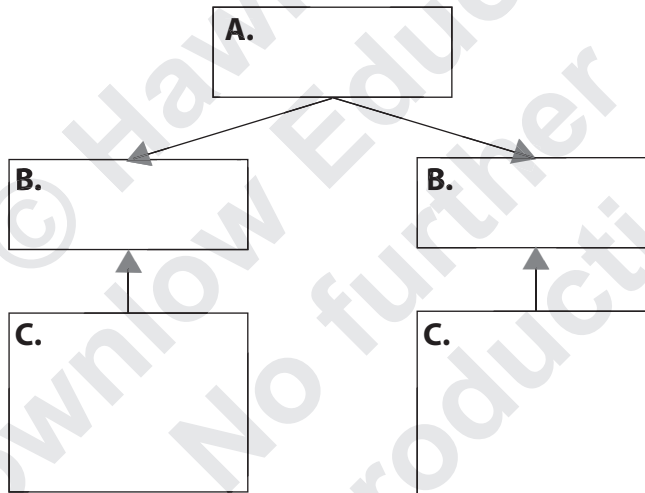
Materials and preparation

1. **Create the student handout.** Begin by choosing vocabulary terms, perhaps using the ones listed in the handout on p. 30.
2. **Create the playing cards.** You will need at least two identical sets of 25 to 40 cards, one for the host and one for the group of players. If possible though, create enough sets of cards so that all group members at this station will have their own deck.
 - a. To create the playing cards, first locate images of artwork on the Internet. To help select the artwork, use the vocabulary list that you created in step one. In other words, if you included the term *sepia*, some of your choices should include this colour. Here are some sites that you will find beneficial:
 - Ibiblio's Famous Artwork's Exhibition (<http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/>)
 - AbsoluteArt's Art History Resources (<http://wwar.com/artists/>)
 - Gary Kaemmer's Famous Artists' Gallery (<http://www.famousartistsgallery.com/>)
 - All Famous Artists' Fine Art by Artists (<http://www.allfamousartists.com/>).

Student Directions:

Advertisement-Consequences Web

1. In box A, list the type of ad your group has chosen (examples include jeans, soft drink, fast cars, skateboarding, etc.).
2. In each box B, list a negative effect that may result if an adolescent views your selected ad. You need two different effects. For example, if you chose "jeans," one effect could be that the ad portrays the idea that the viewer must be skinny to wear these jeans and the viewer may develop an eating disorder. The other effect may be that this particular brand of jeans is preferred above others, and they must be purchased regardless of whether or not the buyer can afford them.
3. In box C, list an argument that could be used to prevent the effect (box B) from occurring. For example, for the first example in step #2, a person could argue that models who wear the jeans in the ad are not the weight of an average person.



Assessment and evaluation

Use the Audience Guide and the Marking Rubric (p. 39) to assess and evaluate students' progress. The Audience Guide is for student use during skit performances. When scoring it, consider that one of its purposes is to promote active listening in order to engage students in interpreting each of the public service messages. Students who identify appropriate outcomes, arguments and applications for all messages may qualify for the "exceptional" rating, and those who have some appropriate responses may qualify as "average".

Student Directions:

Closed Circuit: Student Directions

The Scenario: Because a major hurricane is headed to our area, the school administration has decided to retain all students at school until the storm passes. It is now dark outside, when suddenly, the power goes out. No torches are available, but you remember that Mr _____ has batteries, light bulbs and wire in his classroom and said they could be useful during a power failure. Unfortunately, he is absent today, so you are on your own to try to produce some light.

1. Open up your science log and label the next blank page with the date and title of this station.
2. Write your materials list: 2 wires, 1 light bulb and 1 D battery.
3. Write this problem statement in your log: *How can I light a bulb with just one wire and one battery?*
4. Write your hypothesis by completing this statement: *I think that I can light the bulb by _____.* (How do you think you will light the bulb?)
5. Label the next section of your log *Process*. Draw and write about each of your attempts as you work through the rest of this project.
6. Get your materials. You need two wires and ONLY one light bulb and D battery.
7. Try to light the bulb. Draw each new strategy in your log, showing the placement of your bulb, battery and wire.
8. Once you get the bulb to light, label the next section of your log *Solution*. Draw a picture of your method for lighting the bulb, showing the placement of your bulb, battery and wire. Describe this method below your drawing.
9. Get another wire.
10. Write this problem statement in your log: *How can I light a bulb with TWO wires and one battery, WITHOUT the bulb touching the battery?*
11. Work through steps 4 to 8.
12. Place your log in the Work Handed In slot.