



IMAGINE THAT!

Cultivating Imaginations Through Song Activities

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Teachers' questions are invaluable tools for classroom learning. Questions that elicit children's curiosity and encourage their responses can stimulate imaginations, give meaning to singing, and revitalize traditional favorites. This session will demonstrate the use of questions to elicit imagery for singing activities.

Cultivating Imaginations

1. Some retooling (for you and your students) may be necessary if questions in your classroom are asked primarily for the purpose of getting right answers. Questions that elicit imagining are not fact questions, they are thought questions.
2. Questions to elicit imaginations should be "mistake-proof." Although some answers may warrant further explanation or elaboration, questions such as, "What do you think?" "What might happen then?" "What could that mean?" "What did you hear?" "What might you see?" and "What would you do if . . . ?" *have no wrong answers.*
3. "To get the most out of questioning strategies, we must become more interested in students' thinking, learning, and understanding than in getting right answers." (Bennett & Bartholomew, 1997, 178)

Responding to Students' Imaginations

1. As students offer imaginative descriptions, our neutral responses can facilitate continued participation. Informative feedback rather than lavish praise is preferable. "Planning informative, constructive feedback while observing and listening to students' answers trains us to be thoughtful, reflective, and progressive in building cooperative and constructive classroom interactions." (Bennett & Bartholomew, 1997, 181)
2. "Teachers can encourage independent thinking, provide for fuller and more detailed answers, encourage divergent thinking, gather more information, and be more sure that students understand if they are careful about the way they respond to their students' answers." (Bennett & Bartholomew, 1997, 182)
3. Informative feedback may be used to show interest or recognition, to encourage, to describe, or to evaluate. (Bartholomew, 1993)



To show interest or recognition: "What an interesting way of thinking about that!"
"As you explained your idea, I could picture what you mean!" "I see your idea."

To encourage: "I have never thought of that interpretation before. Tell us more about your thinking." "You are really making connections. Keep imagining!"

To describe: "Your explanation was so vivid that we could imagine ourselves in that scene. We saw ships, water, activity on the shore, and the main character of the song." "Your movements were such a surprise! We saw you coordinate them with the music and correlate them with the meaning of the words."

To evaluate: "That is a clever idea and one that I hadn't thought about . . . such imagination you're using! You gave us an excellent description, because you used words that helped us picture your idea." "For me, your description was a little difficult to understand. Let us observe as you demonstrate your idea. The combination of words and movements may give us some additional clues."

Selected References

Books & Articles

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