

Activity

The Shape(s) of Us

Use the activity below to explore non-verbal, collaborative storytelling through movement and sound.

Materials Needed: construction paper, scissors, markers or crayons, a bin or basket

1. Begin by telling students that they will create a series of movements and minimal spoken words. Explain that they will bring these movements into being with the help of colorful cut-out shapes, which will inspire their movements and sounds.
2. Give each student a piece of construction paper, markers or crayons. Ask students to draw, color, and cut out a shape, object or animal of their choice. Emphasize creative freedom—abstract shapes are welcome, too! Make sure students understand that they can create any shape that feels exciting or interesting to them, as this will inspire their movements later on.
3. When everyone is finished, have students place their cutouts in a communal bin. Tell them that each shape will be picked by someone else to inspire a movement or sound for the shared story.
4. Invite each student to pick a shape from the bin, ensuring they don't select their own. Give students a moment to look closely at their new shape and think about what kind of movement or gesture it could inspire. Encourage them to add a sound that might complement their movements. **Note:** Model a few examples first to break the ice and help students understand the objective.
5. Once everyone has an idea, gather students in a circle to share what they've come up with. Go around the circle, inviting each student to share their shape, and demonstrate the movement and sound they created. Ask the rest of the class to echo each student's movement and sound, helping everyone feel more comfortable expressing themselves through big, simple gestures.
6. After each student has shared and the class has echoed their movement and sound, invite students to pass their movement around the circle. Starting with one student, have them demonstrate their movement again. The person next to them repeats it, and then the next person, until it travels all the way around the circle. Repeat this process with each student's movement, creating a playful and connected group experience.

Reflection Questions:

How did the shape you chose influence the movement and sound you created? Do you think it would have been different with another shape? Why or why not?

What challenges did you face when trying to interpret your shape into a movement or sound? How did you work through those challenges?

How do you think creating and sharing movements together is similar to or different from other types of teamwork or communication?

