

Interactive Activities Workshop

Active Learning Institute

Nov., 2014



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Bringing out the STAR in Kids!

After School Classes Camps Shows

Boomerangs—Which is More Important?

Effect: You show 2 boomerang-shaped papers. Each represents a concept (which you might write on each boomerang). E.g. which is more important when making a speech: content or delivery? Some would argue that content is more important. (Say why & show that the boomerang with the word “content” is bigger.) However, other maintain that delivery is more important. (Show that the delivery boomerang is bigger & give the rationale for it being more important.) In actuality, both are equally important. (Show the boomerangs are the same size.)



Secret: This is an optical illusion. The boomerangs are the same size. In the picture, the yellow one looks bigger. If the blue one is underneath, it would look bigger.

What concepts can you use this with?

Paper Tree

Effect: Magician pulls on a newspaper tube to make a bean stalk that grows to several feet high as the audience keeps yelling “higher”. (Photo #1) This is a good trick for several magicians at once to sprout bean stalks.

Uses: Earth Day, Christmas Tree, rain forest, making paper, civil war-plantations.

Props: 6 or so single sheets of newspaper, a rubber band, and a scissors per person.

Preparation: Get several sheets of newspaper. If you have double sheets, tear them in half to make singles. Roll up 1 sheet of paper until there are ~6 inches left. Feed the next sheet of paper in & do the same (photo #2), until you have rolled 4-6 sheets. The more you roll, the larger the beanstalk, but the harder it is to cut. Do 3 or 4 when first teaching this. When these are in a roll, rubber band the roll in the middle. At one end of the tube, cut or 3-5 leaves, each approx 4 inches long. Fold these outward. (Photo #3) You are ready to perform.

Presentation: “I have a magic bean stalk. Do you think it gets bigger? It only gets bigger if everyone yells ‘bigger’. (They yell ‘bigger’! Pull it up a foot or so.) Do you think it gets any bigger? (Yeah!) What do you yell? (Bigger! Pull it up another foot. Continue having them yell until you’ve pulled it all the way out. You can have it fall over & say ‘Timber’ to end if you wish.)



Photo 1. Pull up the tree!



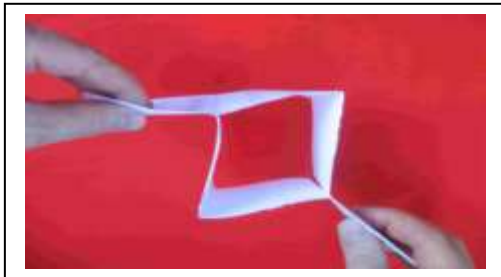
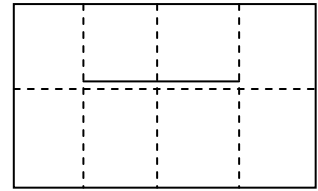
Photo 2. To set up, roll 1 paper up. As you get toward the end, roll the next paper into it. Repeat this, adding in all 4-6 sheets of paper until you have 1 rolled up tube.



Photo 3. Make 3 cuts with the scissors, approx 4-6” long. This makes 3 leaves for your tree.

Folding a Paper into a Booklet

1. Fold the paper in half lengthwise so the printing is on the outside.
2. Fold it in half widthwise so the table is on the inside, and crease. Then fold it in half the other way (widthwise) so the table is on the outside, and crease. You want it to fold easily either way.
3. Fold it in half widthwise again (making it into eighths), again, folding it both ways & creasing each way, so it can easily fold either way.
4. Unfold the paper into a flat sheet again. It should have crease lines partitioning it into eighths. (diagram)
5. If there is not a slit where the solid line is (diagram) in the middle of the paper, put one there. (photo 1)
6. Fold the paper as in photo 2.
7. Fold it into a phone booklet (photo 3).



Dulling the Senses

Effect: You cast a spell that dulls the spectator's senses. To prove this, although the spectator places her thumb & 1st finger on either side of a dollar bill (photo), when you drop it, the spectator is unable to catch it before it slips through his fingers!

Uses: Jot some notes on a slip of paper. Can you “grasp the content”?

Props: 1 play bill.

Secret: It's not as easy as it seems to grab the bill. The spectator doesn't know when you will drop it, & when she realizes that you have, reaction time is not usually fast enough to grab it before it has slipped through her fingers!

Mechanics: First, the magician demonstrates it with his hands. He shows the starting position, drops the bill, and catches it. (It's easy for you to catch it because you know when you are dropping it!) Then, have spectator do it. Usually they will not be able to catch it!

Presentation: “I am going to cast a spell on you to dull your reflexes. (Wave your hands around.) Do you feel different? I'm going to hold this bill, and I'd like you to hold your thumb and first finger in the middle on either side. I'm going to drop the bill and you catch it as it drops. OK? (Drop it. Usually they cannot close around it quick enough & it falls to the table.) See, I told you I dulled your senses! Don't worry, the spell wears off in about a week!”



Fortune Teller Paper

You probably remember these from when you were a kid. Put 8 concepts on it that you have taught. Have the kids get into pairs or small groups, playing it. When they choose one, they have to answer the question. A fun review activity to reinforce content!

Impossible Paper

Show a folded paper. Challenge someone to replicate it with their own sheet of paper. They cannot touch your folded sheet.

Use: Put content on the paper. Or use the paper as a placard.

Concentration Game

This is good for reinforcing learning with pairs of concepts. For instance, suppose you are teaching dates of 10 national holidays. Take 20 index cards. On 10, write the name of a different holiday on each. On the other 10, write the dates. Mix the cards and deal them face down on the table. Students take turns turning over 2 cards. If they turn over the holiday & it's date, they leave both face up; otherwise, they turn the cards back face down. The object is to get all the cards turned over. The students must know their content and pay attention to which cards are where.

Are 2 Heads are Better than 1?

Are 2 heads better than 1? Let's see. 1) Put a straw in a cup of water. Can you drink the water through the straw? Of course. 2) Add a 2nd straw (representing a 2nd person—a team). Put it outside the cup & suck on both at once. What happens? You can't suck any water up, even though 1 straw is in the cup! 3) Put both straws in the cup & suck. Now you get 2x the water as 1 straw. The point? 2 heads are better than one—but they both have to be in the game (i.e. attentive and engaged)!

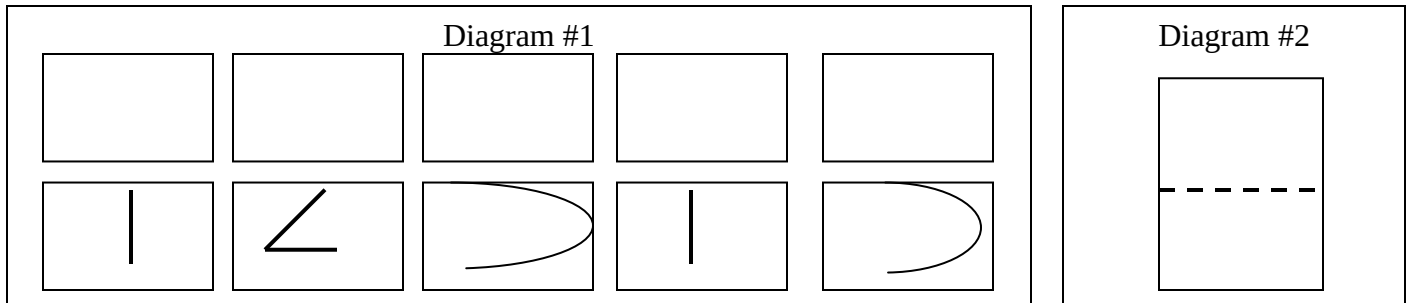
Resolving Conflict

Show a long stick. Challenge: can you find the middle of it without any measuring?

The ends of the stick represent 2 people with opposite views on an issue. To work together, they will need to compromise. Find a balance that both can accept. Meet somewhere in the middle. (Balance the stick on your finger.) You have now found the midpoint without measuring. And learning about conflict resolution too!

Will The Cards Match?

Effect: The magician numbers 5 slips of paper 1,2,3,4, & 5—in big numbers. Spectator shuffles the slips, and magician tears the stack in half, then turns 1 of the halves upside down. The magician states, “The question is: Will the cards match?” Spectator points to a pile (either the face up or face down one). Magician picks it up and spells the 1st word in the question, “Will”. As he says each letter, he moves 1 slip from top to bottom. When he gets to the end of the word, he takes the top 2 slips from each pile and sets them down on the table next to each other. He then repeats this procedure for each word, until he has 5 pairs of slips, each with 1 face up & a face down slip (see diagram #1). Spectator then turns over each face down slip and all the pairs match!



Props: 5 slips of paper, notepad size, and a pen or pencil.

Secret: The trick works itself if you follow the steps.

Mechanics:

1. Number the 5 slips 1-5. Write the number big so it fills the slip.
2. Let spectator mix them up.
3. Square up the pile and tear the pile (all 5 slips) in half. (See diagram #2.)
4. Turn 1 of the halves face down.
5. Ask spectator to pick either pile. Pick that pile up and spell the first word in “will the cards match”, “will”. For each letter, move 1 slip from the top to the bottom. Then take the top slip from each pile and set them side by side on the table.
6. Repeat step 5 for each of the other words, “the cards match”. You’ll be left with 2 slips—1 from each pile, which go together without having to spell anything.
7. Turn over the face down slip in each pair and all pairs should match—i.e. be from the same number.

Tips:

- Write the numbers big, so when the slip is torn in half, a good part of the number is on each half.
- You can also use words or pictures instead of numbers.

Note: You don’t have to use “Will the Cards Match”. Create your own phrase—just follow the guidelines below re # of letters in each word for it to work.

5 slips, 4 words		
Word #	# of letters	Example
1	4 or 9	Will
2	3, 7, or 11	The
3	2, 5, 8, or 11	Cards
4	1,3,5,7,9 or 11	Match

4 slips, 3 words		
Word #	# of letters	Example
1	3, 7, or 11	Can
2	2, 5, 8, or 11	It
3	1,3,5,7,9 or 11	Match

6 slips, 5 words		
Word #	# of letters	Example
1	5 or 11	Abrakidabra
2	4 or 9	Will
3	3, 7, or 11	The
4	2, 5, 8, or 11	Cards
5	1,3,5,7,9 or 11	Match

Math Interactive Activities

An Odd Challenge

You have 6 objects and 3 cups.

Challenge: Using all 6 objects, can you put an odd number of objects in each cup?
(For objects, use crumpled balls of paper, coins, toothpicks, etc.)

A First Number

What is the first number that has an “a” in it?

Making 7 Even

How do you make 7 even?

Changing a \$1 Bill into a 5

Challenge: Ask a spectator if they can turn a 1 dollar bill into a 5. (They cannot cut or tear the bill, of course.)

Props: A \$1 bill. (You can use the one from Picking up the Lunch Check.)

Answers to Math Activities:

An Odd Challenge: In the 3 cups, put 1, 1, and 4 objects. Put a cup with 1 inside the cup with 4.

A First Number: One Thousand

Making 7 Even: Rid the “s”!

Changing a \$1 Bill into a 5: Roll up the \$1 bill in a long, thin tube. (Roll from 1 long edge to the other.) Form the tube into the shape of a “5”! (See picture)

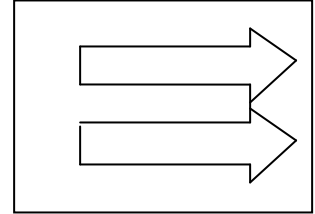


Out of the Box Thinking Interactive Activities

The 3rd Arrow

Draw a diagram with 2 arrows, as in this one.

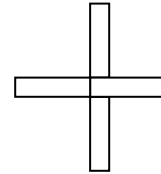
Challenge: Can you add a 3rd arrow? However, you can only draw 2 straight lines!



All Squared Up

Put 4 crayons (or pencils) in a plus sign, as in the below diagram.

Challenge: can you make a square, moving just 1 crayon?



Pushing a Quarter Through a Small Hole

You get a card with a dime-size hole.

Challenge: Can you push a quarter through the hole? No tearing the card (or the hole).

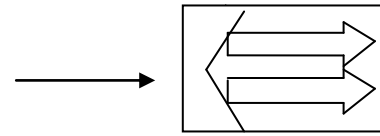
Nails

Challenge: Can you balance 7 nails on the head of 1? The 1 is vertical, sitting in a cap, piece of styrofoam, box top, or whatever. (photo 1). The 7 nails cannot touch the box or the table.



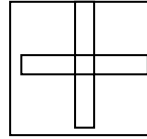
Answers to Out of Box Thinking Activities:

The 3rd Arrow: Draw 2 lines to make an arrow, as in diagram, causing The 3rd arrow to appear, facing the opposite way from the other two.



All Squared Up:

Move 1 outward,
making a square in
the middle.



Pushing a Quarter Through a Small Hole:

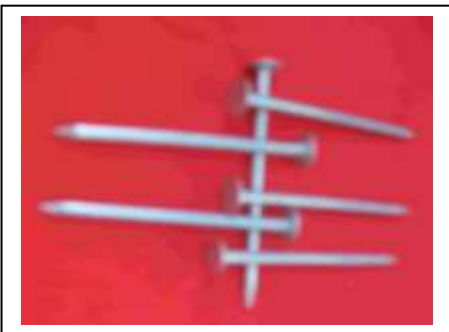
As is shown in the photo, put the tip of a pen or pencil through the hole and push the coin!



Nails:

1. Stand 1 nail going up and down, wedging it between the top and side of the box.
2. Lay 1 nail on the table. Interlace 5 nails perpendicular to it (photo 2).
3. Lay the last nail on top of the 5 interlaced nails (photo 2). Note that the head of the top and bottom nails are at opposite ends.
4. Carefully lift up the scaffolding you've created. Hold it by the top and bottom nails on each end, letting the 5 interlaced nails hang down. Set this scaffolding carefully on the head of the vertical nail in the box! (photo 3)

Note: If you don't have a box, you can have a spectator hold the vertical nail. However, it is a little steadier if it is held by the box or something else.



Reading Interactive Activities

Ben's Mother

Show a penny, nickel, and dime on your palm.

“Ben's Mother has 3 children”, you explain. “The first one is named ‘Diamond Jim’ (push the dime forward). The second is named ‘Nicole’ (push the nickel forward). What is the third one's name? (Point to the penny.)”

Cross Letter Puzzle

TYPGIAEEC

Challenge: Can you configure the above 9 letters in a

3x3 matrix to form 6 words--3 across, 3 up & down?

Snowball Sentence

What is unusual about this sentence:

I do not know where eagles migrate.

Why is it called a snowball sentence?

NEW DOOR

Can you arrange all the letters in “new door” to spell one word?

Answers to Reading Activities:

Ben's Mother: Ben!

Cross Letter Puzzle: See table.

Snowball Sentence: Each word has more letters than the word before.

New Door: “ONE WORD”

P	I	G
A	C	E
Y	E	T

Prop List

Boomerangs—red & blue. 1 for ea participant.
Newspaper-3 double sheets, scissors, rubber band.
Booklet sample
Blank paper – 2 for ea participant
Play bill for ea participant
Fortune teller paper for ea participant
Impossible paper for ea participant
Deck of cards
2 straws
Clean plastic cup
Long stick
4 crayons
Push qtr thru hole card for ea participant
Nails set with cap
Penny, nickel, & dime