

Creating a Class Language

Grade

This activity is perfect for every grade

Purpose

Creating a non-verbal class language is important in creating a community of learners where all children feel loved and valued. It is a way that all members of the classroom can communicate without using traditional voice or communication devices.

Objectives

1. Make a positive connection to a poem
2. learn to communicate non-verbally
3. to empathize with the difficulty of not being able to speak traditionally
4. to increase feeling of community within the classroom
5. Create a non-verbal way for all students to communicate
6. reinforce literacy by creating wall chart with pictures

Resources/Materials/Technology

1. Chart paper with markers
2. final product will be a poster created with Boardmaker symbols.
3. Shel Silverstein book Where the Sidewalk Ends
4. communication devices

Preparation

Start by giving them directions nonverbally for a few weeks prior to the lesson. Tell them to sit in a circle or to get in line by using gestures but no sound. This will get them thinking about non-verbal communication. Program a recordable device with children's suggestions of things that they like to ask each other or tell each other on a daily basis. Have ideas of what you

want them to say but let them come up with the gestures. This way the children will take ownership over their new language.

Activity

Have the children come to the rug. Read the poem Me and My Giant, to the class. Ask, "Wow so these were two friends that couldn't use their voices to talk to each other. What did they do instead?" Let the kids talk about it in their own words. Then say, "What a cool idea those two had. Do you think we could do the same thing? Could we come up with a way to talk without using our voices?" Get the chart paper ready and ask, "what are some things that we say to each other everyday?" Get them to start simple, yes, no or hello is a good place to start. Ask, "How could we show someone 'hello'?" as they suggest motions choose one and draw it next to the word. In the end type up your list and hang it with Boardmaker symbols in the classroom.

Follow-up

Practice everyday until non-verbal communication is a standard part of your classroom. Once they become familiar with communicating in this way, add new words to your list regularly. The children feel special that they know a secret language!