

## **Observation Games.**

I usually use observation games fairly early on with the Year 7's or 8's to make sure they understand that concentration is essential when I dem. They must watch and listen. They all think they can watch and listen perfectly, so I use these games as a way of showing them that they don't/can't.

I might get them to move the furniture or chairs, in an orderly quiet fashion, to come and sit in a circle with me. If they have to bring chairs to watch a dem, this establishes sensible routines right from the start.

Establish the rules:

1. everybody has a turn in order, around the class.
2. if anyone is already familiar with the game, don't shout out the answer and spoil it for the others.

Just occasionally, there is a child who does not want to take part. I judge this at the time, and may encourage them to take part, or let them sit the game out. If they are not taking part, I do turn to them from time to time to ask them, (very gently and without attracting attention to them), if they have worked out what to do, to try to encourage them to see themselves as part of the team.

### **Bunny, bunny.**

You probably know this game - I know it "goes" by other names. You need to be sitting down, with both feet on the floor, where the children can all see you. They should be sitting down, as well.

Occasionally, there's a pupil who says straight away that they know this game. I ask them not to tell the others, but show me when it's their turn. If they really do know how to do it, I'll ask them to dem it later on, instead of me.

Hold up your left hand, palm towards you and fingers apart.

With a finger of your right hand, starting with the little finger, touching the top of each finger of the left hand, saying "Bunny" each time, so we have "Bunny, bunny, bunny, bunny".

As you go down the curve to your thumb, say "Woooooops", saying "bunny" as you reach the tip of your thumb.

Immediately come back down the curve, saying "Woooooops", touching the top of each finger, saying "bunny, bunny, bunny, bunny" and ending with the little finger.

At this stage, and without being too obvious the first couple of times, place the palms of your hands flat down on your thighs/knees. Most pupils usually miss this action.

I offer to show the pupils again at this stage. Many of them are calling out that they know how to do it etc etc (Because they tell me I talk "posh", I do explain it's not how you say it or the tone you use, as I've had some hilarious imitations at times!!)

Now the pupils all want to have a go! It can be chaos, so I insist they take turns, working around the class, calling out "wrong!", as soon as they forget to put their hands down. Chances are, they'll watch another couple of children and then get really enthusiastic and shout out that they know how to do it now! I make them wait their turn!

I offer to dem it again, or, if a pupil knows how to do it, let them do the dem.

Off we go again, around the group - if they get it wrong again, some will be getting frustrated and some will be shouting out that they know what to do, as they did before. It's really good fun!

(I make the point that all I asked them to do was watch and listen as they will in a proper dem. Are they are finding it really hard to do what I am doing? etc etc)

You can show them again and again, and some still won't be able to do it.

Judging when the time is right for your group, make a bit more of a show of putting your palms flat on your thighs. (There have been times when, in desperation, I have held my hands up above my head, before bringing them down!)

Once they have understood it, I find they like a "lap of honour" where they all do it and they are so proud of themselves!

Chances are they'll try it on their Tutor, friends at break time etc, so you can't bank on using it with all year 7/8 classes!

The next game also works well while the pupils are still sitting in the circle.

### **The rolling pin (or ruler) game.**

Pick up a rolling pin in your right hand, holding it at the bottom and turn it in an anti-clockwise circle twice, as if you were drawing in the sky, saying as you move it "I take the rolling pin and pass it on". As you are saying the "pass it on", transfer the rolling pin into your left hand. You then offer the rolling pin to the person sitting on your left. Hopefully, they will take it in their right hand, saying the same thing, before transferring to their left hand.

I am always staggered by the number of pupils who find this so difficult and forget to transfer to their left hand. Try it and see how your groups manage!

If I'm going to use the next game as an example of watching and listening skills, I "develop" a little cough from the start of the lesson, so the pupils don't "cotton on" too quickly!

Pupils need to be able to see what you are “drawing” on the table and have space to do it themselves. It does teach them to be co-operative and not to push and shove if they are standing!

### **The Moon is round.**

Picking up a ruler or rolling pin, in your hand, ask if everyone is really concentrating. Remind them they are watching and listening. (I tell them they don't have to speak like me!!)

"Is everybody watching and listening?"

"Yes"

I have a little cough. Using the end of the rolling pin, tap it lightly on the table top. Use it to “draw” a circle on the table top, saying "The moon is round. It has two eyes, a nose and a mouth," quickly “drawing” in the appropriate lines as you speak. Offer to show them again. Remember a little cough before you start to draw.

Of course, it looks so easy, they all think they can do it! Work your way around, each child having a turn. I let each child do it completely before saying "wrong".

You can show them again and let them all have another go. One or two will try to see if the circle should be drawn clock wise or anti clockwise etc

Showing them again, I ask them if they would like me to tell them the second I know they have gone wrong? Usually they say "yes". The game moves very quickly then, with me saying "wrong", "wrong", "wrong" etc which really makes them laugh.

Depending on the group, my "cough" might get really obvious at this stage, or you can keep the game going!

"A lap of honour" is essential again, with pupils really proud of themselves and dying to try this out on others.

Another game is the 10-12 items on a tray where you gradually remove some of them. This also works well.

There was an observation game where you crossed your ankles at the end, but I can't remember anything else about it. Can any body help?