Lesson Plan: Ben Franklin’s Inventions

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Step one: Preplanning selection of topic, etc.

- **Activity:** Ben Franklin’s Inventions and Commercial Making
- **Theme:** Group game which helps 4th grade students learn the true methods to advertising by learning more about inventions and creating a commercial.
- **Drama/learning goals:**
  - To understand the methods of making commercials to market a product
  - To produce a commercial to sell different objects
  - To learn additional information about inventions
  - To provide a non-threatening opportunity for children to perform
- **Skill levels:**
  - Skill 1: *Cooperation:* Members of the group will need to be able to work well together.
  - Skill 2: *Concentration:* Members of the group will need to be able to focus or concentrate on individual and group activities.
  - Skill 5: *Expression as a Character (verbal and non-verbal):* Members of the group will need to be able to use their bodies, their imaginations, and their voices to create dialogue.

Step two: Presentation of materials

- **Strategies for introducing the activity and establishing the mood:**

  **Welcome 4th graders, today we have lots to talk about that goes along with our Benjamin Franklin history lesson we had yesterday. We'll recap first before we begin our activities for the day. Ask class the following questions:**

    Who remembers some of the things Franklin invented? Hold up the printed off pictures at this point. **(Possible Answers: Bifocals, Franklin stove, a library chair, and swim fins).** If the students are confused and still think Franklin invented electricity, say this: “Fourth graders, even though he didn’t invent electricity, he made important discoveries that led to the invention.” Then say to the students: “We’re going to use the information we learned yesterday for today’s activities, so hopefully you all paid attention in class yesterday!”

- **Relationship to current unit:** related to chapter 2 in the communication, concentration, and imagination sections
- **Preparation and set-up of materials:** No materials are necessary other than the four printed off pictures of some of Franklin’s inventions. **(Bifocals, swim fins,**
library chair, and Franklin stove). Where the students will be playing the game, the space will need to be open with no chairs and tables around.

**Step three:** Discussion

- **Instructions for preparation:**
  - Have the students form a circle in the back of the room. Join if you would like and are able to.
  - Discuss with the students about inventions. This will be a follow up from yesterday’s lesson on some of Ben Franklin’s inventions. Discuss several definitions for inventions, the purpose of them, and several examples of inventions besides Franklin’s learned about the day before. *(Answer: definition—something new created not already on the market for sale or available to the public already. Purpose—to make things easier, faster, safer, or more enjoyable for people. Examples—super glue, microwave, Snuggies).*
  - Have the students each share 2-3 inventions they know of that are their favorite. Have them explain why they are their favorite.

- **Instructions for playing:**
  - Tell the students they will now begin the first activity of the day. Each of them will be either using an object in the room of their choice OR other people in the room to make up their own “machine invention.”
  - The students may “use” as many other students as necessary to construct his or her invention.
  - The rest of the class needs to try to guess what the invention is used for. If they can’t guess the correct purpose, the student who invented the machine can tell the rest of the class.
  - After every student has participated in the machine activity, guide them into the final activity of the day.
  - Ask the students to share with the rest of the class some of their favorite commercials. Have them explain their reasons why they are their favorite and also explain why commercials are so important and their purpose. *(Answer: crest toothpaste, snuggies, or Dr. Pepper commercials, commercials are important because they are huge advertisements, purpose are to persuade people to buy things they don’t have).*
  - Explain to the students in a few minutes, they will be breaking up in teams of 2-3 students. Each team will be expected to either make up their own item to try to sell in their commercial or use a product already on the market. Give the groups plenty of time to perfect their commercials.
  - Have the groups present their commercials to the rest of the class.
  - If extra time, each team can evaluate each other’s commercials. The teams can tell what they liked and didn’t like about each commercial and why or why not they would buy the product.

- **Casting, volunteers, etc.:**
  - **Commercial Makers**—whole class
• **Machine inventors**—whole class
  • **Teacher**—classroom leader; monitor’s student work

**Strategies for involvement:**
  • Encourage the students to really get involved with the rest of their team while making up their own commercials. Let them know you really expect their commercials to turn out great with lots of energy and enthusiasm!

**Check for understanding and clarity:**
  • Every so often during the game, make sure to ask the class if they have any questions pertaining to the game itself. It might be necessary to explain a specific step of the game to the class so the students understand.

**Step four:** Playing the material

• **Instructions:** While the students are playing the game, remind them of the directions throughout so they continue to play the game correctly. During the activity, the instructor could even give helpful suggestions so the game goes more smoothly and is more fun.

• **Sidecoaching ideas:** If the students seem to be having trouble thinking of ideas for their commercials, she should tell them to think of ideas by brainstorming items they have seen repeatedly on television. The students should also keep in mind about the things that make people actually buy a product they see on television.

• **Your participation:**
  • The teacher’s role is to monitor the students closely during both activities to help them when questions arise. The teacher should make helpful suggestions, but remember the students need to also be having fun during both activities.

**Step five:** Evaluation and reflection

• **Questions to generate discussion and reflection:**
  • Does everyone see the importance of commercials and inventions now?
  • Can anyone think of an invention or commercial they do not like and why?
  • Was it easier coming up with an invention or creating a commercial for that invention?

**Step six:** Replaying

• **Be ready to respond to requests to replay the activity! 😊
• Strategies to encourage replaying:**
  • Make a change to the game to keep it interesting.
- The students could have to draw from a hat an activity they have to create a commercial for. This would give the activity more structure, but still allow them to have fun with it.

**Step seven:** Evaluation and reflection

- **Questions to generate discussion and reflection:** See step five!