



Living Machine

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Work form with a focus on thinking tools 'seeking alternative possibilities' and 'being inspired by the ideas of others'.

PURPOSE

Children broaden their horizons:

- by looking for alternative solutions.
- by being inspired by the ideas of others.

BEFORE YOU START

Determine the topic on which you want to work. Choose a problem for which you want to find a solution together. Carefully formulate the thinking task.

E.g. theme 'water', problem 'factories discharge their waste water into our watercourses', thinking 'think about different ways to prevent dirty waste water from the factory from ending up in nature'.

Investigate, together with the children, different aspects/elements that are important for the problem:

- site
- product manufactured in the factory
- characters
- nature in and around the watercourse
- etc.

Determine which elements and which perspectives are important for the problem. Write them on separate cards.

E.g. factory manager, employees, fish in the water, local residents, animals on land, location of the factory, products made, etc.

Provide the necessary space: a room where the children can work in groups: acting out, drawing, painting.



MATERIAL

- large sheets of paper
- drawing and/or painting equipment
- cards for the different perspectives

STEP 1

The children discuss the problem in small groups. They determine roles within their groups, for acting out the problem. They make a 'living machine', depicting the situation, in which each child plays a role and acts it out without talking.

STEP 2

The children think in groups about what can be changed in the situation, so that the problem is solved or reduced.

For example, they devise a way to prevent dirty waste water from the factory from ending up in nature.

They can do this in two different ways:

- first come up with a plan and then depict it. This is the way they will probably do it at first.
- depict the problem, and while doing so act out a solution or part of the solution. You, as teacher, will have to suggest this way to them. It is enriching because it gives them the opportunity to be inspired by the acting and movement itself.

If a child's role changes, or something changes in an element (e.g. the location of the factory), they also act this out.

Their 'living machine' has now changed in such a way that the problem is reduced or has disappeared.

STEP 3

The groups depict their two 'living machines' for the others.

The others - the audience - interpret and tell what they see.



This expresses the solution which the group had in mind.

The audience complements this with their own ideas by physically joining the 'living machine'.

As teacher, articulate the mental processes that are addressed in this step:

- We show that multiple ideas can be thought up. There are always several possibilities. (Think up several possibilities.)
- We think together. Together we have more ideas. This the way one becomes inspired by others. (Let yourself be inspired by others.)

Provide them, in this way, with the vocabulary needed to express their thought processes.

EXTENSION:

The children draw or paint their ideas. In this process it is also possible to refine, supplement or change ideas.



REFLECTION

- Which thinking exercise did you do?
- What was difficult/not difficult/fun in this exercise?
- Did you see something added to a 'living machine' which you found interesting or fun? What? What did you find interesting/fun about it?
- In this task we came up with different ideas. We did this together. How does it feel to think of something together?
- Have you ever thought up something with others? What is difficult about thinking together? What's easy about it?
- How can you make thinking together easier?
- In what context at school/at home/elsewhere do you find it interesting to think together (instead of alone)? Why?
- When it comes to problems, it is often said that no solution is possible. What do you think about that?

The thinking tools used in this work form ('looking for alternative possibilities' and 'being inspired by the ideas of others') stimulate your creative thinking.