

Looking and observing: Short skill activity

This activity helps to foster a habit of looking at a fixed point several times and realising that making repeated observations heightens your awareness of what is around you.

Take the class outside. Get the students to stand in circle with you standing in the middle, holding a ball. Ask them to turn around so that they are facing outwards. Ask them to focus their sight on something that they can see straight ahead of them.

What do you see?

Get the class to quickly turn back in. Pass the ball to one of the students. Whoever catches the ball has to describe what they saw and then they now can pass the ball on to another student who has to do the same. This can be repeated several times although each observation must be different. If a student has got an observation that has already been said then they have to pass the ball on. Then ask the class to turn out again and look straight ahead of them. Now they need to focus their observation on something new that has not been described already.

What do you see?

Get the class to quickly turn back in and repeat the process as before. The aim of this activity is to show how repeated observations allow you to build up a richer picture. Repeated observations can enable you to look beyond the first thing that grabs your attention. It also helps students appreciate that working together can generate a wider range of observations and perspectives.

It might be helpful to have a brief discussion with your students about this, after their experience:

What do you think this tells you about observing outside?