

# Specific Learning Disabilities Activity

## The Battle of New Orleans

**Step 1:** Divide the classroom into two teams. Give each team three minutes to choose a team name, a team captain, and a name for the team captain. At the end of three minutes ask each team captain to report on the names of their respective teams as well as their own names as captains. Write these names on the board in score-keeping format.

**Step 2:** Explain that you will play a trivia game using lyrics of the song "The Battle of New Orleans." Each team will be given a series of questions and up to two minutes per question to decide on an answer after hearing the song sung through one time. Questions will be presented in rounds, with each team receiving one question per round. Explain that the only person allowed to present the answer is the captain of the team. Encourage the team members to huddle quietly in discussing and choosing answer to prevent giving away an answer to the opposite team. If one team does not correctly answer a question, the other team will have a turn to steal that point by answering the question. If neither team answers the question correctly, explain that another opportunity to answer the question will be provided at the end of the initial rounds when song will be sung again. All questions that have not been answered will then be presented to both teams. Once again, only the captain is allowed to answer. However, this time each captain will be required to raise a hand to indicate readiness to answer the question. The opportunity to provide an answer will be given to the person who is the first to raise a hand. Demonstrate the process of asking questions in a round with each team having a turn to answer a question. Explain that if one team misses a question and the other team gets a turn, then that team will have two turns in a row, allowing them to have the opportunity to score points twice. One point is awarded for each question answered correctly. One or two rounds may include questions with two parts. When this occurs, the question given to each team will have two points to make scoring fair.

When presenting the song in a second chance round, first sing the entire song through from start to finish. If neither team correctly answers a question, you may choose to play only a few phrases of the song to help students focus attention on the lyrics to listen closely for the answer. If students still do not correctly answer the question, slow down in the section of the lyrics that provides the answer and look intently at the students.

**Step 3:** Ask students to look at an array of rhythm instruments and choose ones to orchestrate the song. You may choose to demonstrate playing each instrument and then ask if anyone has an idea of where the instrument could be used to reflect the story of the song. Reward any student who provides an answer with the opportunity to either play that instrument or to choose who will play it. A combination of sound effects made by using hands, feet, and mouth may be used along with the instruments to provide orchestration.

## Sample of Orchestration

Lyrics	Sample of Orchestration
"The Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico"	Make a swishing sound with mouth to portray ocean waves
"Fired our guns"	Strike claves together
"Fired once more"	Strike claves together
"They began a-runnin'"	Move feet on floor or put hands on top of thighs to simulate running
"We seen Colonel Jackson a-walkin' down the street"	Move feet or pat hands on top thighs to portray walking
"Drive the British from the sea"	Make a swishing sound with mouth to portray ocean waves
"We fired our canon"	Strike a big bass drum to simulate the boom of canon
"Then we grabbed an alligator"	Slowly move scraper across guiro to imitate sound of an alligator
"Filled his head with mini-balls and powdered his behind"	Shake Maracas
"But when we touched the powder off, the gator lost his mind"	Everyone shout, stomp and clap.
"We marched back to town"	Move feet on floor or pat hands on top of thighs to simulate marching
"Danced all night"	Move both hands from left to right while snapping fingers
"Marched back home"	Move feet on floor or pat hands on top of thighs to simulate marching
"Run through the briars"	Move feet on floor or pat hands on top of thighs to simulate running
"Run through the brummels"	Move feet on floor or pat hands on top of thighs to simulate running
"Run so fast"	Move feet on floor or pat hands on top of thighs to simulate running
"The hounds couldn't catch 'em"	Yelp like a dog

Provide a practice cue for each instrument or action. Next, speak through the series of cues and allow each student to respond with appropriate instrumental playing or action.

Take 1 – Rehearse the song from start to finish providing head-nod cues for each instrumental part or action. Review and rehearse any problem spots in isolation.

Take 2, 3, 4... – Repeat as necessary until performance is ready for video taping.

**Step 4:** Make a video tape of the performance. View the video tape and critique it. Identify problem areas and possible ways to remediate each problem. Video tape each possible solution. Allow the students to watch the video tape of possible solutions and then discuss and choose the best solution for each problem.

#### Example of Problem

The Native American drum that is used to portray water sounds is not loud enough to be picked up on video tape.

Possible Solution #1 – Person who is playing the Native American drum should play louder.

Possible Solution #2 – Person who is playing the Native American drum should move up closer to auditory intake of video machine.

Possible Solution #3 – Everyone else should soften their singing and playing.

**Step 5:** Now rehearse the changes that were made (one/s chosen after evaluating possible solutions). Once the group is secure with performance, re-videtape the entire performance. Repeat the evaluation and rehearsal techniques until the final video performance is considered ready to show to others.

**Step 6:** Take the show on the road. Perform the song live for people in other classrooms.

The song lyrics have been modified to use “really in a jam” in place of the profanity in the original lyrics.

You may ask the students to find the grammatical error (“We seen Col. Jackson”).

**Goals & applications for persons with learning disabilities, ADD/ADHD, cognitive disabilities, and emotional and behavioral disorders**

**Structure**

- Using teams
- Providing listening cues (people, places, food and animals)
- Allowing second chances
- Demonstration of one round with sample question used for each team
- Trivia game
- Rule that only team captain may provide answers
- Use of team to make decisions for correct answers
- Use of instruments to orchestrate story

**Purpose**

- Builds group cohesion/teamwork
- Provides motivation due to competition
- Develops social interaction
- Develops impulse control
- Helps focus attention
- Builds motivation just when frustration tolerance is waning
- Rewards success instead of punishing failure
- Provides concrete demonstration
- Clarifies instruction
- Minimizes confusion
- Makes listening and memory work fun
- Provides motivation via competition
- Builds impulse control
- Minimizes confusion
- Develops team work
- Takes pressure off any one person
- Builds excitement and motivation just as attention is beginning to wane
- Involves application of information from previous step in lesson plan

- Rehearsal with words or phrases serving as immediate cues for instrument or body part sounds production
- Playing instruments
- Making a tape of the performance
- Listening to/watching the tape
- Use of rehearsal takes (take 1, take 2...)
- Process of critique and problem-solving
- Taking the show on the road
- Provides opportunity for creative problem solving/thinking via application
- Assists with securing performance
- Ensures success and confidence
- Helps attention focus at that point
- Builds level of excitement
- Assists with securing performance
- Ensures success and confidence
- Helps attention focus at that point
- Serves as a reward
- Continues to build level of excitement and actually serves as peak
- Develops impulse control
- Develops attention focus
- Builds level of excitement and motivation
- Helps to decrease negative behaviors
- Builds frustration tolerance through repeated rehearsal takes
- Offers opportunity for learning how to be patient and problem-solve
- Develops decision-making skills
- Develops ability to list possibilities and rank them based on effects
- Builds excitement
- Requires continued attention focus and helps develop maintenance of attention focus even when excited
- Serves as reward
- Builds self-esteem