

Chindogu: Useless Inventions

Mod.2.4

TIME

180 minutes

OVERVIEW

Chindogu is a Japanese word meaning “useless invention.” Students use the communication skills of writing, speaking, and representing to persuade a “consumer” of the advantages and merits of purchasing a useless invention. This can be accomplished through a written advertisement, a video commercial, a poster, or some other appropriate means.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Through this learning experience (LE), students will achieve specific learning outcomes (SLOs) in various subject areas. Consider the intent of this LE and your choice of instructional and assessment strategies to determine which SLOs students may achieve, in addition to those identified.

English Language Arts

Consider the intent of this LE and your choice of instructional and assessment strategies to determine which SLOs students may achieve, in addition to those identified below:

- 2.3.2 *Techniques and Elements* — Identify significant elements and techniques in oral, literary, and media texts, and examine how they interact to create effects.
- 2.3.3 *Vocabulary* — Experiment with ambiguity in language [such as puns, jokes based on multiple meanings, poetry...] in a variety of contexts.
- 4.1.1 *Generate Ideas* — Focus a topic for oral, written, and visual texts integrating ideas from experiences and a variety of other sources.
- 4.1.2 *Choose Forms* — Select specific forms [such as diaries, narratives, speeches, letters, poetry, mime...] that serve particular audiences and purposes.
- 4.2.4 *Enhance Artistry* — Choose language, sounds, and images [including transitional devices] to enhance meaning and emphasis.
- 4.2.5 *Enhance Presentation* — Prepare detailed and organized compositions, presentations, reports, and inquiry or research projects using templates or pre-established organizers.
- 4.4.2 *Effective Oral Communication* — Use appropriate volume, phrasing, intonation, non-verbal cues [such as body language, facial expression...], and presentation space to enhance communication.
- 4.4.3 *Attentive Listening and Viewing* — Demonstrate critical listening and viewing skills and strategies [such as recognizing main idea and details, identifying inference...] and show respect for presenter(s) through appropriate audience behaviours [such as giving non-verbal encouragement, responding to emotional aspects of the presentation...].

Science

Consider the intent of this LE and your choice of instructional and assessment strategies to determine which SLOs students may achieve, in addition to those identified below:

- SLOs related to Scientific Inquiry or the Design Process in Cluster 0: Overall Skills and Attitudes.

ICT LITERACY SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

Consider the intent of this LE and your choice of instructional and assessment strategies to determine which skills and competencies students may achieve, in addition to those identified below:

- basic operating skills
- concept mapping
- graphics creation
- inquiry using electronic sources
- electronic publishing
- spreadsheet analysis
- web page authoring
- word processing

SUGGESTED LEARNING RESOURCES**Software**

- word processing
- spreadsheet
- web authoring
- graphics

Internet

- IMYM Links Database: <<http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ks4/tech/imym/resources/links.html>>
- Searching the Internet using the term “chindogu” will return several hits, many with illustrations.

Print

- Appendix C: Index of Teaching and Learning Strategies and Tools
- Kawakami, Kenji. *101 Unuseless Japanese Inventions: The Art of Chindogu*. London, UK: Harper Collins, 1995.

Video

- Canadian Learning Company. *Alistair's Time Machine*. Videocassette. Toronto, ON: Canadian Learning Company, 1991. (Use the segment entitled “Inventions That Never Really Made It.”)

BLMs

- BLM Mod.2.4#1: Peer Assessment of an Advertisement
- BLM Mod.2.4#2: Advertisement Planning
- BLM Mod.2.4#3: Useless Inventions Discussion List

TBLMs

- TBLM Mod.2.4#1: Useless Inventions
- TBLM Mod.2.4#2: Examples of Advertising Strategies

SUGGESTIONS FOR INSTRUCTION**Preparation and Set-up**

- Students collect and contribute magazine and newspaper advertisements, promotional flyers, and printed web banners directed at young people. These are used to set up a wall display.
- Select appropriate learning resources that students can access during this LE.

Activating Strategies

- Students survey parents and/or peers to identify which advertisements or commercials they like best and which they like least, and to determine why. As a class, categorize and graph or chart the survey results using a spreadsheet (see ICT.12: Chart This). Discuss the results, focusing on why each of the identified advertisements or commercials was effective or ineffective at persuading the reader/viewer.
- Use TBLM Mod.2.4#2: Examples of Advertising Strategies to discuss different types of advertising strategies. Students categorize the wall display items (advertisements, promotional flyers, and banners) into the types of strategies discussed.
- Review Mod.1.3b#1: Why Do We Invent? to see how some inventions serve different purposes for different people. Students discuss why the same invention can be useful to some and useless to others.
- Using a computer and projection system, show a website that describes a Chindogu.
- Students visit the selected website, as well as other Chindogu websites, and peruse resources assembled for this LE.

Acquiring Strategies

- Brainstorm a list of useless inventions and the purpose such inventions might serve. Use ideas from TBLM Mod.2.4#1: Useless Inventions to get the discussion started. List student suggestions on a class chart or use the “rapid fire” feature of concept-mapping software. (When the concept map is finished, display it in Outline form, print it, and post it.) (See ICT.6: Inspired.)

OR

In collaborative groups, students use BLM Mod.2.4#3: Useless Inventions Discussion List to brainstorm for useless inventions, their alleged advantages, and the reasons they are essentially useless.

- Students select one invention to market (from the class chart or their own choice). They prepare an advertisement to sell their chosen useless invention, using any of the types of advertising strategies discussed in class.
- With student input, develop a class rubric to assess the advertisements. Consider the following categories: language, presentation, marketing effectiveness, and communication skills.
- In collaborative groups, students brainstorm effective strategies to “sell” their useless invention. They fill out BLM Mod.2.4#2: Advertisement Planning.

Applying Strategies

- Students prepare an advertisement for their useless invention. The advertisement may be presented in the form of a poster using graphics software (see ICT.4: Looks Like This), a newspaper advertisement, a live or videotaped commercial, or a web page banner (see ICT.11: Make It: Creating an Effective Web Page).
- Students introduce their useless invention to the class using their advertisement.

Variations/Extensions

- Advertising strategies are sometimes called “propaganda.” Students look up that word in the dictionary. They discuss whether this term applies to advertising, and why or why not.
- Students videotape a publicity segment for a useless invention. The advertisement should be no longer than 30 seconds.
- Students vote for the best advertisement and post it on the class website.

- Students compare a Chindogu invention and a Rube Goldberg invention, using BLM 1.3c#1: Compare and Contrast Frame.
- Discuss online marketing aimed at children, and the similarities and differences between this form of marketing and traditional marketing. (To prepare for this discussion, visit websites that provide information and lessons on the subject, such as those identified in the IMYM Links Database.)

SUGGESTIONS FOR ASSESSMENT

- Confer with students about their completed BLM Mod.2.4#2: Advertisement Planning. Provide feedback by writing comments about their planning on their BLMs.
- Students use BLM Mod.2.4#1: Peer Assessment of an Advertisement to give feedback on the advertisements of their peers.
- Use the class-developed rubric to assess the useless invention presentations. Confer with students on their performance in their advertising presentation, based on the rubric and observation.

CONNECTION TO INVENTION CONVENTION

- The purpose of this LE is to stimulate creativity for the creation and promotion of student inventions. Students become aware of advertising strategies and practise the communication skills they will need when promoting and selling their own invention at the Invention Convention.

BLM Mod.2.4#1: Peer Assessment of an Advertisement

Name _____ Date _____

1. What was effective in the advertisement?
2. What convinced me that I need the product being advertised?
3. What needs improvement?
4. What else would have helped convince me?
Comments

BLM Mod.2.4#2: Advertisement Planning

Name _____ Date _____

1. What useless invention am I trying to sell?
2. Who might need my useless invention?
3. Why would they need my useless invention?
4. How can I convince them that they need my useless invention? What advertising strategy will be most effective?
Teacher Comments

TBLM Mod.2.4#1: Useless Inventions

Invention	Supposed “Advantage”
1. Battery-powered battery charger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can be used when no electricity is available
2. Dehydrated water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • requires less room to carry
3. Downhill stair climber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allows you to exercise without becoming too tired
4. Freeze-dried water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is not so heavy to carry
5. Flashbulb tester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensures that your flashbulb will work when needed
6. Ice skate sandals (for use in hot climates)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • keep your toes cool while doing your favourite sport
7. Luminous sundial (for use at night)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enables you to see the time in the dark
8. Non-intrusive alarm clock (raises a flag instead of ringing a bell)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not disturb other people who are still sleeping
9. Solar-powered flashlight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eliminates the need for batteries
10. Sundial with glow-in-the-dark markings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enables you to tell time day or night
11. Waterproof teabags	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will not be ruined if they accidentally get wet

TBLM Mod.2.4#2: Examples of Advertising Strategies

Advertising Strategies	
Bandwagon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • imply that everybody else is doing it, and therefore you can do it too
Card Stacking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present only one side of the issue, requiring listeners to seek additional information before making a choice
Name Calling (Mudslinging)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make a product look better by slamming and pinning a bad label on the competition
Plain Folks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appeal to the common, ordinary people (like “all your neighbours” or “all your friends”)
Price	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • claim that a product has the best price
Rewards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promise additions (such as toys, trinkets, free gifts, rebates, and so on) on the next purchase
Snob Appeal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appeal to people who want to look like they’re part of an exclusive group (such as movie stars or pop artists)
Testimonial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have an individual (such as an athlete, a movie star, a celebrity, and so on) endorse a product

