

Crossed/Uncrossed



Aim of the activity

- To develop problem solving skills.
- To develop patience and an understanding of how to overcome frustration.



Logistics

- Any space where the group can sit in a circle.
- A pair of scissors or two pens/pencils or any two small, long objects
- Any number can participate but 8 - 15 is ideal.



Delivery Tips and Risks

- Reiterate that this is an individual task that must be worked out by the individual. Resist the urge to tell your friends or shout out the answer.
- Encourage theories to be explored but ask them to keep their theory to themselves and not to think aloud.
- Monitor the room to ascertain levels of frustration and pacify where necessary.
- There will be a small number who are unable to think differently and will become increasingly entrenched, upset and/or frustrated. You can gently introduce clues so that everyone gets it in the end.
- Ensure that no one laughs at anyone else for not getting this. This is about everyone solving the puzzle and with the support rather than the answer everyone can find the resolve to succeed.

Directions

- Sit the group in a circle
- Pass the two objects crossed or uncrossed around the circle and say 'I am passing these to you (crossed or uncrossed)'. The object of the game is to ascertain whether they are really crossed or uncrossed.
- The 'trick' is to cross or uncross your legs when passing the two objects. It makes no difference whether the two objects are crossed or uncrossed. The two objects may not be crossed but if you have your legs crossed, you are passing crossed!
- The key is to be subtle about this and 'misdirect' the group initially ensuring the attention is kept to the two objects and away from what your legs are doing.
- Make sure that those that work it out do not blurt the answer out to their peers or laugh at them for not getting it.
- As the game progresses you may need to make your actions more obvious to aid the moment of realisation for all.



Adaptations

You could pass in silence to see if people notice.

Similar Activities

Any of the thinking activities.

Ball Juggling

Aim of the activity

- To work together to achieve an outcome.
- To consider different strategies for success.
- To compete in a controlled, pressured environment.



Logistics

- Either an outdoor space or an indoor space with a high ceiling.
- This works best with 8 - 15 people per circle, anymore and you can make two teams.
- At least 5 balls per group, up to enough balls for one group to have one ball per person. These can be any size.



Delivery Tips and Risks

- This activity is not about being quick or being able to throw and catch a ball, it is about people helping each other to keep the balls in the air. Therefore, encourage the group to throw balls at the right height and speed for the person catching.
- If a pairing are struggling e.g. 6 throwing to 7 is hard because it is too far across the circle, get the group to consider how they can be supported, or what needs to change.
- The more balls that go in, the more chaotic it is, so do not introduce too many too soon. Encourage quality not quantity.
- Get the group to consider what is important for helping each other e.g. making sure the person receiving is aware that a ball is coming because you have called their name and they have looked at you.
- Get the group to consider heights and position of people (staying in a strict circle is not important).

Directions

- Everyone stands in a circle about one arm's length apart.
- Go round the circle and number the players from 1 to however many you have e.g. 10.
- Then ask everyone to mix up so they are no longer standing next to a consecutively numbered person e.g. 5 cannot be next to 4 or 6, 1 cannot be next to 2 or 10 (as the last person in this example).
- When all mixed up, check that consecutive numbers are not standing next to each other by getting everyone to call out their number.
- The No. 1 player throws the ball to No. 2, No. 2 to No.3 and so on.
- This continues until the ball makes its way to everyone once and returns to the original person.
- Each player should receive the ball only once. Players are to remember to whom they throw the ball.
- The leader throws the first ball. As the rhythm of the pattern becomes smoother, and throwers and receivers get used to it, another ball is added, then a third, then a fourth and so on.
- Players should be able, depending on the size of the group, to keep six or seven balls moving at once, and ultimately there can be the same number of balls for the amount of people in the circle.
- Players should never have more than one ball in their hands, and balls are not allowed to touch the floor. If either of these things happen, start the rhythm again.



Adaptations

- This could be done indoors sat down, using items such as rolled up paper balls or bean bags.
- Can be used as a name game to start with (up to three balls) - calling out from me to you - e.g. from Sam to Natasha, from Natasha to Rob, etc

Similar Activities

This activity is both active and requires problem solving, so covers lots of similar activities.

Moon In The Spoon

Aim of the activity



- To develop problem solving skills.
- To learn to understand a bigger perspective.

Logistics



- Any number can participate but 8 - 15 young people is ideal.
- A space big enough for the group to sit in a circle.
- Ideally, to fit the story, you need some sort of spoon, however you could use any small object particularly if it is shiny.

Delivery Tips and Risks

- Be aware of the levels of frustration in the group, give clues where necessary but don't give the answer away.
- Allow the group to reflect on the different emotions and requirement to control their shouting out. Make these learning points to frame the experience.
- Encourage theories to be explored but ask them to keep their theory to themselves and not to think aloud.
- Monitor the room to ascertain levels of frustration and pacify where necessary.
- There will be a small number who are unable to think differently and will become increasingly entrenched, upset and/or frustrated. You can gently introduce clues so that everyone gets it in the end.
- Ensure that no one laughs at anyone else for not getting this. This is about everyone solving the puzzle and with the support rather than the answer everyone can find the resolve to succeed.

Directions



- Sit the group in a circle.
- Take a shiny dessert spoon and give it to a person in the circle and ask them what it is. They will look it and reply sheepishly a spoon? You say 'Yes it is a spoon but can you see anything else?'. 'No' will come the reply and you say "Thank you" making it a subtle response, whilst taking the spoon off the other person, then you look deep into the shiny object, tilt it to reflect the light, pause and say "I can see the moon in the spoon can you?" The group will look at you confused.
- Your job is to tell them a story, for when you look at this ordinary spoon you don't see a spoon you can see the moon in the spoon and that you want to know if anyone else can. All the group need to do is say what you said.
- Each member of the group passes the spoon around the circle in turn attempting to say what you said. Most will not have remembered that on the first time you said 'THANK YOU' as you took the spoon before then saying, "I can see the moon in the spoon". The magic phrase has to include 'thank you' on receiving the spoon.
- This is a difficult game for people to solve. They often become entrenched in looking and not listening, meaning they copy your actions but not what you say.
- Once some of the group solve the task and reflect the skills of subtlety and maturity empower them with decision making approving or disapproving the answers of their peers as professionally as you have. You must still adjudicate.

Adaptations

This game does require the need to recognise that thank you is being said, however, it does not mean that you cannot play it with people who have difficulty hearing, as it is about perception and picking up of clues when observing people.

Similar Activities

Any of the thinking activities.

Smiley Face



Aim of the activity



- To develop problem solving skills.
- To develop patience and an understanding of how to overcome frustration.

Logistics



- Use a room/outside space big enough for the group to sit in a circle.
- Any number can participate but ideal number is 8 - 15 people.

Delivery Tips and Risks

- Be calm and clear, and exaggerate the actions.
- Reiterate that this is an individual task that must be worked out by the individual. Resist the urge to tell your friends or shout out the answer.
- Encourage theories to be explored but ask them to keep their theory to themselves and not to think aloud.
- Monitor the room to ascertain levels of frustration and pacify where necessary.
- There will be a small number who are unable to think differently and will become increasingly entrenched, upset and/or frustrated.
- Ensure that no one laughs at anyone else for not getting this. This is about everyone solving the puzzle and with the support rather than the answer everyone can find the resolve to succeed.

Directions



- Get the group to sit in a circle.
- As leader, mime the drawing of a smiling face to the following words 'I can draw a smiley face. It has two eyes, a nose, some squiggly hair and a big smiley face. Can you?'
- The next in the circle has to repeat the words and attempt to draw a smiley face as you, the leader, has done.
- What the group won't have noticed is that you, the leader, will have drawn the smiley face with your left hand. Unless the young person draws it with their left hand then they will not have completed the task correctly.
- If you are right handed, the natural assumption is to perform the action with the right hand. The player will not have observed that you, the leader, have done the action with your left hand. If you are left handed, you will not realise why you are getting the task right.
- Doing the action with your left hand is key to solving this problem. The words are a distraction.
- If the group struggles encourage them to think about how we get information;
- Listening - Ears
- Watching - Eyes in this case the most important
- Doing - Touch
- If the individual gets it straight away i.e. they draw the smiley face with their left hand, this may be because they are naturally left handed. Therefore to 'test' whether they have worked the problem out ask them to NOT draw a smiley face correctly. In this case you would expect them to perform the action with their right hand.
- It is important that the ones who work it out don't tell their friends: you, the leader, are trying to get them to work this out for themselves. It is this moment of realisation that we want them to experience because it is replicable in other situations.

Smiley Face



Adaptations

- Judge when you need to make things easier to notice and so give extra clues.
- When you draw with your left hand, you can make the 'L' shape with your thumb and forefinger, this gives a clue.
- If necessary get them to sit behind you or other students who have solved it to observe and mirror the positive behaviour, but only as a last resort.

Similar Activities

Any of the Thinking Games.