

Team Building: Getting Students Ready to Work Together.



Norm Green
Director,
Teaching and Learning
Georgian College.
normg@rogers.com

A professional learning experience designed to engage and motivate students to be effective team players

Team Building: Getting Students Ready to Work Together.

Teambuilding activities increase the ability of students to work together. The process of developing teams involves building relationships so that members of the team feel connected to one another. Just because we put students into teams does not mean that they will work well in teams. Many students have had bad experiences working in teams, and therefore we should not be surprised when students are skeptical when asked to work with others.

Educators, however, are being asked to have their students work in teams as team work is considered a crucial skill for the 21st century. This means that we, as educators, must take the time necessary to prepare students for team work by giving them opportunities to experience cooperative interactions that can set the stage for more challenging tasks.

If we look at Kolb's Learning Model we see that students learn first from concrete experience then from processing and finally, from reflecting on the new learning. By analyzing the experience, they can begin to appreciate the implication of these new ideas and processes to their work. Continued opportunity to experience, reflect and synthesize leads to new learning and to an appreciation of how these ideas and actions might be used effectively.

What is an Effective Team

A team is a group of students who work interdependently towards the achievement of a goal or the completion of a task. In other words, members of a team come together, agree on a goal and agree that the only way to achieve the goal is to work together (Johnson & Johnson 1995)

Teams can be differentiated from other types of groups by certain characteristics:

Positive Interdependence

Good teams are characterized by mutual goals and a positive interdependence that results in members working together to share resources, support and assist each other, and celebrate joint success.

Individual Accountability

On a productive work team, each member is individually accountable for his or her share of the work, and all members' contributions are assessed regularly.

Group Processing

Effective work teams must allow adequate time for reflecting on their accomplishments and assessing whether team members are maintaining effective working relationships.

Small Group and Interpersonal Skills

Work teams function effectively only if members have and use interpersonal and small group skills, including leadership, decision making, trust building, communication, and conflict management skills.

Face to Face Interaction

Extraordinary accomplishments can result when team members interact with each other on a regular basis and become personally involved with the task and with each other.

Why Use Team Building Activities?

Since teamwork involves students interacting with one another, it is possible to set the stage for more complex tasks by having them experience cooperative interaction in activities that, by their nature, are fun and engaging. In a more serious vein we can see from research on learning that an interactive experiential approach results in effective learning. For example:

Cognitive Science Research Studies indicate that people learn more effectively and apply their newly learned knowledge and skills more effectively through games and activities. Research on such diverse areas as stress, anxiety, creativity, and self-esteem reinforce the generalization that we need to play more in order to improve our learning.

Multiple Intelligences. Recent studies on the nature of intelligence conducted by Howard Gardner at Harvard University, have expanded our normal definitions of intelligence to include 8 intelligences. One of those intelligences focuses specifically on *Interpersonal Intelligence* and it is acknowledged that that the other 7 as well, could be strengthened with a strong effective use of cooperative team learning.

Emotional Learning. Learning activities that incorporate an emotional response result in long-lasting learning. Boredom is not conducive to effective learning. Games and activities that include appropriate levels of cooperation within teams and competition across teams, add emotional elements to learning.

Practice and Feedback. Learners, at any age, cannot master skills without repeated practice and feedback. Team building activities provide opportunities for practicing interpersonal skills and for receiving immediate feedback from peers.

Some Thoughts about Facilitating Team Building Activities:

Before Conducting the Activity

1. **Select the most appropriate activity.** Begin by identifying the activities that match your curricular purpose. Decide whether you want students to be working in teams and whether or not they have the skills to complete the task. Remember that team builders are designed to give students positive experiences while working with a team. Be sure to select the specific activity that best matches your available time, number of students and other logistic constraints.

- 2. Review the activity.** If necessary, recruit a co-facilitator to assist you.
- 3. Conduct a dry run.** Walk through the steps of the activity with your co-facilitator. Make suitable adaptations to better suit the needs and preferences of your students. Reflect on the variations you might have to make so that your students will have a successful experience.
- 4. Estimate the number of students** and collect all the required supplies and materials. Make enough copies of game materials and handouts.
- 5. Specify the overall goals and objectives for your team-building session.** Decide how to reach additional objectives that are likely to be achieved by the activity.
- 6. Plan your briefing procedure.** Decide whether to present a “lecturette” before conducting the activity. Prepare an outline for this presentation along with suitable visuals.
- 7. Plan your debriefing procedure.** Prepare a list of discussion questions to ensure that students will reflect on their performance, gain useful insights, and share the learning points with one another. Start with the questions we have included.
- 8. Anticipate possible disasters.** Ask yourself a series of ‘what-if’ questions. Brainstorm preventative steps and contingency plans with your co-facilitator.
- 9. Anticipate a smooth flow of the activity.** Visualize your students enjoying the activity and learning from it.

During the Activity

- 1. Get into the activity as quickly as possible.** Keep your initial presentations and instructions to a minimum.
- 2. Present an outline of the important rules and steps of the activity.** Assign roles to different students and distribute the materials.
- 3. Warn students that they may be confused initially.** Explain that things will become clearer as the activity progresses.
- 4. Don’t interfere with participant behaviours once the activity has begun.** Remind students of the rules when necessary. Implement time limits and other rules in a fair but flexible manner.
- 5. Move smoothly from one stage of the activity to the next.**
- 6. Bring the activity to a definite conclusion** at the end of the assigned time period or when the goal is achieved.

After the Activity

- 1. Conduct a debriefing discussion.** Ask students to reflect on their performance and share their insights with one another.
- 2. Ask students to report on what they learned from the activity.** Also, ask them for their action plans based on the newly learned procedures and principles.
- 3. Invite students to ask you questions about the activity and the learning outcomes.** Correct any misconceptions. Add suitable caveats—conceptual material and/or lessons from your experience—to prevent students from going far beyond the data.
- 4. Suggest suitable follow-up activities.**

And Always Remember.....

These games and activities are tools to help you achieve learning goals. Keep focused on these goals to prevent an activity from becoming an end in itself. Be flexible. Although games and activities have rules, don't become obsessed with them. An important requirement for effective teamwork is to maintain your sense of humour and to take serious things playfully.

References:

- Armstrong, T., *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom*, Alexandria, Virginia: ASCD, 1994
- Bellanca, J., *Building a Caring Cooperative Classroom*, Palatine, Illinois, Skylight Publishing, 1991
- Bennett, B., *Beyond Monet*, Ajax, Visutronics, 2001
- Craigen J. and Ward C., *What's this Got to do With Anything?* Ajax, Visutronics, 1994
- Jensen E., *Teaching with the Brain in Mind*, Alexandria, Virginia: ASCD, 1998
- Joyce, B. R., Calhoun, E. F. *Creating Learning Experiences, The Role of Instructional Theory and Practices*, Alexandria, Virginia: ASCD, 1996
- Parker, C. M., *Team players and teamwork* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1990.
- Scholtes, P., *Teams in the Age of Systems*, in G. M. Parker, Best practices in teams, vol. 1. Amherst, MA: HRD Press, 1990, pp. 229—251.

Same Birthday (Primary, Junior, Intermediate, Senior)

Group Size: whole class

Time Line: 5 minutes

Equipment Needed: 30 chairs

Space Required: classroom

Activity Description:

1. Predict the number of duplicate days of birth.
2. Number each chair/desk - 1 to 31.
3. Students stand by the seat of their birth and find others with the same birthday and month.

Get Acquainted (Primary, Junior, Intermediate, Senior)

Group Size: any size class over 15

Time Line: 10 minutes

Equipment Needed: Get Acquainted sheet, pencil or pen

Space Required: classroom

Activity Description:

1. See next page for record sheet.

GET ACQUAINTED SHEET

Names and faces go together soon after you have met your classmates. But you know very little about your friends if you know only their names.

Find out about your classmates by completing the blanks below with the names of your classmates. Try to find a different person for each description.

Find a classmate...

1. who has blue eyes _____
2. who has three brothers _____
3. whose middle name has six letters _____
4. who has travelled to another country _____
5. whose parent is a teacher _____
6. who is centimetres tall _____
7. whose favourite TV show is the same as yours _____
8. who has gone to camp _____

9. who likes to read _____
10. who wears glasses _____
11. who likes spinach _____
12. whose favourite colour is purple _____
13. who has a birthday in September
14. whose father's name is Jim _____
15. who lives more than one km from school _____
16. who is the only child in the family _____
17. who rides a bus to school _____
18. who has a married sister _____
19. who is afraid of mice _____
20. who has two great-grandparents _____

OVERTIME: Make up other descriptions and find classmates who will fit the descriptions.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Get as many different signatures from class members as possible

1. likes to ski.....
2. can cook his/her own meals
3. has read a book by Judy Blume.....
4. saw Honey, I Shrunk the Kids.....
5. owns a Batman T-shirt.....
6. baby sits.....
7. went to a cottage this summer
8. has journeyed outside Canada.....
9. is the eldest child in the family.....
10. plays a musical instrument.....
11. wears size 7 shoes.....
12. has more than one pet.....
13. watches (name the TV program).....
14. likes old Beatles' music.....
15. has a younger brother.....
16. has lived somewhere other than.....

17. has had their tonsils removed.....
18. loves computers.....
19. lives in an apartment.....
20. wants to pursue a career in sports.....
21. has sung in a choir.....
22. can speak another language.....
23. likes peanut butter and banana sandwiches.....
24. has been camping.....
25. has been on a volleyball team.....
26. is a good artist.....

Colour Shapes (Primary)

Group Size: multiples of 4

Time Line: 5-10 minutes

Equipment Needed: A • R + shape cards in sets of different colours (1 colour per group of 4)

Space Required: classroom

Activity Description:

1. Each student is given one shape card (in one of the colours).
2. Objective is to find the other shapes in your sequence and in your colour (i.e. red A must find red •, red and red 4).

(Reinforces concept of colour and shape.)

Nursery Rhymes (Primary)

Group Size: 4 in a group

Time Line: 5-10 minutes

Equipment Needed: 4 lines of a nursery rhyme cut in strips

Space Required: classroom

Activity Description:

1. Hand out nursery rhyme lines.
2. Find your rhyme.
3. Read it to group.

Fly Around (Primary)

Group Size: 20+

Time Line: 2-5 minutes (can be repeated)

Equipment Needed: none

Space Required: gym or classroom where areas are clear

Activity Description:

1. A divisible number of children are chosen to be “pilots”. (e.g. 5 pilots for 20 children,
3 pilots for 18 - to make even groups)
2. Figure out how many groups you want - 1 pilot for each group.
3. Pilots sing “Fly around the (choose a topical word), eg. “maple tree”, “farmyard”.
Fly around the maple tree
Fly around the maple tree
Fly around the maple tree
Looking for a leaf. (partner)
Rap and tap on someone’s shoulder
Rap and tap on someone’s shoulder
Rap and tap on someone’s shoulder
Now you’ve got a leaf. (partner)
4. Person who’s shoulder is tapped joins pilot (behind), hands on waist
5. Repeat verse and new person joins group, etc. until all children are chosen.

Alphabet Line-up (Primary, Junior, Intermediate, Senior)

Group Size: classroom

Time Line: 5-10 minutes

Equipment Needed: none

Space Required: perimeter, of classroom

Activity Description:

1. Children line up so first names/last names are in alphabetical order.
2. Then form random groups of any size by counting off.
- 3.

Puzzle Pieces (Primary, Junior, Intermediate, Senior)

Group Size: 5 -?

Time Line: dependent on group size

Equipment Needed: large pieces of a single puzzle

Space Required: large enough for free movement

Activity Description:

1. Give out pieces of puzzle.
- 2.. Each finds one person who has piece that fits.
3. Partners find another set that fits, etc.
4. Requires co-operation.
- 5 Can be done in silence, timed, etc.
6. Works well as a group “getting to know you” activity.
7. Try leaving pieces out and have small groups draw in the missing pieces using inference.

Numbers or Head-to-Head (Primary, Junior, Intermediate, Senior)

Group Size: whole class - work down to groups of 5/6

Time Line: no more than 5 minutes

Equipment Needed: none, physical space (move desks, chairs)

Space Required: open area, 1/2 class or so

Activity Description:

1. Know how many students are present, so that you’ll be able to figure out groupings.
2. Students will arrange themselves in groups according to the number given by teacher and how the group should interact. i.e. 5 - toe to toe
3. The leftover children move to the side of the class.
4. Continue with more examples: 4 - elbow to elbow; then increase speed, etc
5. Continue and when students get down to 5 or 6, rather than having a winner (or pair), you make a number based on a group they won’t be able to do. i.e 5 kids left — ‘pinky to pinky, 7.
6. On a few occasions, students will pull in kids from the side (very creative)
7. Students have fun doing it. You could also stop at groups of 4, 3, etc. and keep those as your cooperative group.

Birthday Game (Primary, Junior, Intermediate, Senior)

Group Size: 10-15

Time Line: as quickly as possible

Equipment Needed: nothing

Space Required: classroom/gym/outside

Activity Description:

1. Students arrange themselves in order according to their birthdates from youngest to oldest.
2. Form groups of any size.

Grouping By Sitcoms (Primary, Junior, Intermediate, Senior)

Group Size: entire class

Time Line: three minutes

Equipment Needed: puzzle pieces (cards with sitcom characters' names, i.e. Cosby Show - Theo, Vanessa; Simpsons - Bart, Marg, Homer)

Space Required: entire classroom

Activity Description:

1. Each student will be given a card with a sitcom character's name on it.
2. Students are responsible to search for all the other characters from their sitcom.
3. When their group is complete, everyone should sit down.
4. This activity is a good welcoming activity or a mixer to get different students interacting.

Sing-a-long (Primary, Junior, Intermediate, Senior)

Group Size: 1 —* 30

Time Line: 5-10 minutes

Equipment Needed: strips of paper with the beginning lines of well-known songs, i.e.
Row, Row, Row Your Boat, etc.

Space Required: room to move around

Activity Description:

1. Everyone is given a piece of paper with the opening line of a common song or nursery rhyme.
2. By singing aloud, find other people who have the same song and form a group of..?

Animal Grouping (Primary)

Group Size: 9+

Time Line: 5 minutes

Equipment Needed: strips of paper with types of animals

Space Required: classroom, gym

Activity Description:

1. Strips of paper with animal names (Le. monkey, snake, elephant) are placed in a bag.
2. Students pick one and act out the animal they've chosen.
3. They end up in groups according to their actions or animal sounds.

Meet Your Partner (Primary, Junior, Intermediate, Senior)

Group Size: depends

Time Line: 20 minutes or so

Equipment Needed: name card

Space Required: enough room to move around

Activity Description:

1. Each person is given a name card of one member of a famous couple.
2. They are to find their partner, e.g. Mickey Mouse and Minnie Mouse.
3. Next they are to find 1 other couple to form a particular category. i.e. cartoon couples, presidents/wives (political figures), actors/actresses.
4. This forms their HOME GROUP.

Let's Get Together (Primary)

Group Size: small or regular class size -

Time Line: 3-5 minutes

Equipment Needed: set of picture/picture and word cards that go together, ie. shoes and socks, cup and saucer, joystick and computer, etc

Space Required: classroom

Activity Description:

1. Place cards face down on each desk.
2. Ring bell.
3. Students look at card and circulate to find partner and must then decide upon order. (i.e. cup and saucer not saucer and cup)
4. Partners stand together holding up picture plus one or two fingers to signal order
5. This activity establishes random pairs for an activity.

Colour Match (Primary)

Group Size: 10-25

Time Line: 5-10 minutes

Equipment Needed: none

Space Required: corners or areas of classroom

Activity Description:

1. Find someone with same colour (any article of clothing, hair, eyes. etc.).
2. Form groups whatever size teacher likes for group activity.

Three Blind Mice (Primary)

Group Size: 4 per group

Time Line: Plan and Practice - 10 minutes; Present - 5 minutes

Equipment Needed: none

Space Required: 3 metre square for each group

Activity Description:

1. Each group plans and practices actions for Three Blind Mice.
2. Each group in turn presents to the other groups as whole class sings.
3. Extend by going to classes around the school - each group to different rooms.

Who is Missing (Primary)

Group Size: any size

Time Line:

Equipment Needed: none

Space Required: floor space for a large circle

Activity Description:

1. Children form large circle.
2. Sit down - bend heads downward with eyes closed.
3. Teacher moves quietly around circle - gently touching 1 child on the shoulder.
4. That child quietly leaves room (stands in hallway).
5. Children then stand up - change places.
6. Then look around circle to see who is missing.
7. Ask child who puts hand up first.
8. Do this 4 or 5 times.
9. Don't forget to call child in from hallway.

Keep It Up (Primary, Junior)

Group Size: 17-25 (larger numbers for younger children)

Time Line: couple of minutes

Equipment Needed: parachute, or large sheet (for small group), utility ball or similar

Space Required: open floor space with adequate ceiling height or outside

Activity Description:

1. People spaced equally around outer border of parachute, moving parachute up and down as a ball moves, bounces and generally stays in motion. (Good as an introduction activity to other activities in parachute play.)

Memory Game (Primary Junior)

Group Size: whole group

Time Line: 1-5 minutes

Equipment Needed: tray, 12 assorted objects, scarf, pencil, paper

Space Required: table top

Activity Description:

1. 12 objects are displayed on the tray and covered with the scarf.
2. Groups gather around table, unveil the tray, and give students 30 seconds to (silent) observe the tray.
3. Cover tray and have each group list as many objects as they can remember
- 4.

Getting To Know One Another (Primary, Junior)

Group Size: partners — group of 4

Time Line: approximately 10 minutes

Equipment Needed: paper, markers

Space Required: Classroom

Activity Description:

1. In pairs, draw each others' hand and share 5 pieces of information about yourself filling in the fingers.
2. Introduce this new friend (5 pieces of information) to 2 others in your group of

My Favourite Food (Primary, Junior)

Group Size: small groups (no more than 8)

Time Line: 5 minutes

Equipment Needed:

Space Required: enough for group to form circles

Activity Description:

1. Each child says his/her name in group and states what their favourite food is when they say their name.
2. As each person speaks, he/she has to say what was said previously and add their own name/food.
3. Continue around group until all have contributed.

Getting To Know One Another (Primary, Junior)

Group Size: partners — group of 4

Time Line: approximately 10 minutes

Equipment Needed: paper, markers

Space Required: classroom

Activity Description:

1. In pairs, draw each others' hand and share 5 pieces of information about yourself filling in the fingers.
2. Introduce this new friend (5 pieces of information) to 2 others in your group of 4

My Favourite Food (Primary, Junior)

Group Size: small groups (no more than 8)

Time Line: 5 minutes

Equipment Needed:

Space Required: enough for group to form circles

Activity Description:

1. Each child says his/her name in group and states what their favourite food is when they say their name.
2. As each person speaks, he/she has to say what was said previously and add their own name/food.
3. Continue around group until all have contributed.

Touching Toes (Primary, Junior)

Group Size: 8-12

Time Line: 1-2 minutes

Equipment Needed:

Space Required: enough to come together

Activity Description:

1. Students stand in groups of 8-12 with right foot forward, all toes touching in the centre.
2. They attempt to hold each other up so they can get their left feet off the ground.
3. Ask them to count the seconds they are in position and they try to beat their record

60 Second Math Warm-up (Primary, Junior)

Group Size: vanes

Time Line: 60 seconds

Equipment Needed: watch with second hand

Space Required: classroom

Activity Description:

1. In 15 seconds tap your feet as fast as you can. Record the number.
2. In 15 seconds snap your fingers. Record the number.
3. In 15 seconds blink your eyes. Record the number.
4. In 15 seconds clap your hands. Record the number.

5 Tally up the count and share your scores.

Co-operative Esteem Building Name Poster (Primary, Junior and Intermediate)

Group Size: Groups of 4 or 5

Time Line: 3-5 minutes group brainstorming and 2 minutes whole class sharing

Equipment Needed: 12” x 18” piece of construction, paper per group; coloured marking pens

Space Required: floor or table

Activity Description:

1. Each group prints the first initial of every group member down the left side of the paper.
2. Within three minutes, each team is to come up with a positive phrase or woni to describe every team member.
3. The phrase or word must begin with the same letter as the initial.
4. Students write down the comments on the paper.
5. They reconvene as a whole class and share their poster and the descriptions of each member.
6. Posters may be saved and used as “Group posters” for group gatherings.

Group Chant (Primary, Junior and Intermediate)

Senior

Group Size: whole class

Time Line: 1 minute

Equipment Needed: none

Space Required: anywhere

Activity Description:

1. This method can be used to introduce a new word that you want to discuss, or as a review or to teach spelling.

2. It is based on the “cheerleader” cheer.

Leader - Give me an ‘E’ Class Response - E

Give me an N

Continue - . -

What have you got? “Energizer”

Appreciation (Junior, Intermediate)

Group Size: regular class size

Time Line:

Equipment Needed: envelopes (for name strips) - one for each member; 5 copies of names of whole group cut in strips, pouch/pocket with each members' name

Space Required:

Activity Description:

1. Each envelope has 5 random strips of paper with names and a blank strip.
2. "Envelopes are handed out to each member.
3. Write a positive comment about the person whose name appears on the strip. Blank strip may be used as an additional positive comment if need
4. Positive comments are then placed into different members' pouches.

Name the Parts (Junior, Intermediate)

Group Size: doesn't matter

Time Line: 2-5 minutes

Equipment Needed: paper, pencil

Space Required:

Activity Description:

1. In your group, make a list of 10 body parts that only have 3 letters, e.g. lip, leg, arm.
2. Hint: 5 are above the neck and 5 are below.

Complete the Sequence(Junior, Intermediate)

Group Size:

Time Line:

Equipment Needed: overhead projector or blackboard

Space Required: regular' classroom

Activity Description:

Have each group complete the following sequences:

1. M, V, E, M, . __ __, __, __,
2. A,B,C,D,___...

3. A,D,G,J, M_...
4. O,T,T,F,F,_J_J...
5. lvi, T, ‘ _’,
6. J, F, M, A, M, ,_ ,_ , , _.....,

Answer Key:

1. Planets in Solar System
2. Alphabet
3. Skip 2 letters of alphabet
4. First letters of the number words
5. Days of week
6. Months of year

It’s Your Math Deal (Junior, Intermediate)

Group Size: groups of 3 or 4

Time Line: 5-10 minutes

Equipment Needed: decks of cards — enough decks to supply one deck to a group of 3 or 4 students

Space Required: group gathers around a desk or in a circle on the floor
Activity Description:

1. For groups of 3 or 4.
2. One person is first dealer.
3. Teacher or class decides what will be done with the cards mathematically as they are dealt (e.g. deal 2 cards and, multiply them together).
4. First person in group to shout the correct answer wins those cards.
5. Deal and play for 1 minute.
6. Gather in cards and pass the deal to person on dealer’s left.
7. Change dealer and operation until each person has dealt.
8. This is an easy, quick, fun way to drill math skills.

Alphabet Story (Junior, Intermediate)

Group Size: whole class

Time Line: 5 minutes or keep going and start over

Equipment Needed: imagination -:

Space Required: class

Activity Description:

1. One student will start a sentence beginning with a word that starts with letter A
2. The next player will add a sentence with a word that starts with b, then c, d, etc.
3. It must make sense to form a story.

Co-operative Story (Junior, Intermediate)

Group Size: group of 5 members

Time Line:

Equipment Needed: instruction sheet, pen

Space Required: classroom

Activity Description:

1. Each member is assigned responsibility for writing one part of a story - When? Where? Who? What happened? What were the consequences (ending)' to form a story line.
2. When assembled, the story could be collectively read orally (This could also incorporate the 5 W of a good news story.)

Imaginative Vocabulary Interpretation (Junior, Intermediate, Senior)

Group Size: full class, groups of 3 or 4

Time Line: 2-3 classes

Equipment Needed: short story text, paper, markers, drama props

Space Required: entire room or more

Activity Description:

1. Groups analyze a story/passage for significant/poetic words.
2. Write a poem using only the words from the text.
3. Group will dramatize their poem and present their skit to the class using mime, dialogue, costuming, props, etc.

Word Magic (Junior, Intermediate, Senior)

Group Size: groups of 2, 3, 4

Time Line:

Equipment Needed: paper, pencils

Space Required: groups of 2, 3, 4

Activity Description:

1. Depending on your subject, you choose a title, e.g. Lake Vista Public School, Remembrance Day Ceremony, etc.
2. The students in their groups come up with as many words contained in the letters of this title as possible within a CERTAIN TIME.
3. Kids really love this, especially if there is a timer on.

“Build A Story” Tableaux (Junior, Intermediate, Senior)

Group Size: 20-30 students

Time Line: 20-30 minutes

Equipment Needed: none

Space Required: anywhere the class can sit in a circle

Activity Description:

1. Have the class sit in a circle.
2. Choose 1 student to go to the centre and freeze” into an action.
3. Tap another student on the head and have them add to the tableaux.
4. Continue until there are 8 or 9 students creating the tableaux.
5. Choose students from the circle to ‘tell” the story as they see it.
6. Repeat until the fun ebbs.

Guess The Fib (Junior, Intermediate, Senior)

Group Size: 3-4

Time Line:

Equipment Needed: none

Space Required:

Activity Description:

1. Each person in the group has a turn to make three statements about himself/herself.
- 2 Two must be true, and one a plausible fib.
3. Others in the group try to reach consensus on which statement is the fib.

Name That Tune (Primary, Junior, Intermediate, Senior)

Group Size: groups of 3-4

Time Line: 3-4 minutes maximum

Equipment Needed: tape recorder, pre—taped excerpts

Space Required: classroom

Activity Description:

1. Students stand up within home groups.
2. A tape excerpt is played of maximum 3-5 small snippets of songs.
3. Answers are given by students.
4. Teacher can either keep a running total of correct answers so groups that better their number of correct answer receive rewards or just do it as a fun break.

Coat of Arms (Primary, Junior, Intermediate, Senior)

Group Size: whole class

Time Line: 30 minutes to 1 hour

Equipment Needed: photocopy of Coat of Arms - or they may draw their own, pencil paper

Space Required: classroom — students work in partners

Activity Description:

1. Each student makes his/her own Coat of Arms.
2. In quadrant 1, draw your favourite pastime.
3. In quadrant 2, draw your favourite food.
4. In quadrant 3, draw your favourite sport.
5. In quadrant 4, draw what you aspire to be.
6. Once the student finished the Coat of Arms, he or she goes to his/her partner.
7. They introduce themselves.
8. Then one partner must introduce the other to the class.

Variation: a group creates its own Coat of Arms.

Object of Value (Primary, Junior, Intermediate, Senior)

Group Size: any size

Time Line: vary

Equipment Needed: none

Space Required: any

Activity Description:

1. Each person takes a piece of personal property of value to himself/herself, and after telling the importance, exchanges it. -
2. He/she can then exchange again as often as wanted, or keep the first object received for any set time (less than one day).
3. With each exchange the story of the object's value is retold.

Magic Eleven (Primary, Junior, Intermediate, Senior)

Group Size: 3 or 4

Time Line: 10-15 minutes

Equipment Needed:

Space Required: any space

Activity Description:

1. Group the children into 3's or 4's.
2. Children stand and put one hand behind back.
3. The children form a fist with the other hand and move their fist to the count 1, 2, 3. On 3, the children must show a number of fingers.
4. The game proceeds until the group attains the number eleven or more when the fingers are added together.
5. This is to be done silently.

Nifty Numbers (Primary, Junior, Intermediate, Senior)

Group Size: groups of three or pairs

Time Line: 10 minutes

Equipment Needed: pencil/paper

Space Required: minimal

Activity Description:

1. With your partner(s), agree on one number between 1 and 9.
2. Brainstorm for as many ideas/items as possible that include or represent that number.
3. Represent each idea on a mind map.

Cooperative Balloon Pass (Primary, Junior, Intermediate, Senior)

Group Size: 4-8 to a group

Time Line: 5 minutes

Equipment Needed: one balloon per group, chair for each student

Space Required: area for chairs to be set up in a circle for each group

Activity Description:

1. Sit on chairs in circle.
2. Pass balloon around circle using feet only 3 times.
- 3 Last person 3rd round sits on balloon and breaks it - Finished!

I Am Special Because.. (Primary, Junior, Intermediate, Senior)

Group Size: 25-30

Time Line: 20 minutes

Equipment Needed: I Am Special Because..." booklets for each student made from construction paper and loose leaf paper and pens or pencils to write with

Space Required: classroom, desks or tables to write on. Allow students to circulate as they pass their booklets around

Activity Description:

1. Students pass their booklets around to each classmate to write in one reason or statement why they think that student is special
2. POSITIVE statements only. This must be emphasized to begin with.
3. The exercise could be introduced with the story "Love and the Cabbie". (See next page.)
4. Students may have the option of signing their name along with their comments.
5. Students then get to keep their own booklet after they are filled in.
6. They are to be kept to themselves and not meant to be shared with anyone else unless they want to.
7. I encourage them to take them home and share with their parents.

Love and the Cabbie

I was in New York the other day and rode with a friend in a taxi. When we got out my friend said to the driver, "Thank you for the ride. You did a superb job of driving."

The taxi driver was stunned for a second. Then he said: "Are you a wise guy or something?"

“No, my dear man, and I’m not pulling you on. I admire the way you keep cool in heavy traffic.”

“Yeh,” the driver said and drove off.

“What was that all about?” I asked.

“I am trying to bring love back to New York,” he said. “I believe it’s the only thing that can save the city.”

“How can one man save New York?”

“It’s not one man. I believe I have made the taxi driver’s day. Suppose he has twenty fares. He’s going to be nice to those twenty fares because someone was nice to him. Those fares in turn will be kinder to their employees or shopkeepers or waiters or even their own families. Eventually the goodwill could spread to at least 1,000 people. Now that isn’t bad, is it?”

“But you’re depending on that taxi driver to pass your goodwill to others.”

“I’m not depending on it,” my friend said. “I’m aware that the system isn’t foolproof so I might deal with 10 different people today. If, out of 10, I can make three happy, then eventually I can indirectly influence the attitudes of 3,000 more.”

“It sounds good on paper,” I admitted, “but I’m not sure it works in practice.”

“Nothing is lost if it doesn’t. I didn’t take any of my time to tell that man he was doing a good job. He neither received a larger tip nor a smaller tip. If it fell on deaf ears, so what? Tomorrow there will be another taxi driver whom I can try to make happy.”

“You’re some kind of a nut,” I said.

“That shows you how cynical you have become. I have made a study of this. The thing that seems to be lacking, besides money of course, for our postal employees, is that no one tells people who work for the post office what a good job they’re doing.”

“But they’re not doing a good job.”

“They’re not doing a good job because they feel no one cares if they do or not. Why shouldn’t someone say a kind word to them?”

We were walking past a structure in the process of being built and passed five workmen eating their lunch. My friend stopped. “That’s a magnificent job you men have done. It must be difficult and dangerous work”

The five men eyed my friend suspiciously.

“When will it be finished?”

“June,” a man grunted.

“Ah. That really is impressive. You must all be very proud.”

We walked away. I said to him, “I haven’t seen anyone like you since ‘The Man from La Mancha.’”

“When those men digest my words, they will feel better for it. Somehow the city will benefit from their happiness.”

“But you can’t do this all alone!” I protested. “You’re just one man.”

“The most important thing is not to get discouraged. Making people in the city become kind again is not an easy job, but if I can enlist other people in my campaign...”

“You just winked at a very plain looking woman,” I said.

“Yes, I know,” he replied. “And if she’s a schoolteacher, her class will be in for a fantastic day.”

Art Buchwald (From *Looking Out, Looking In* Adley & Towne, Holt, Rinehart & Winston)

Stories With Symbols (Primary, Junior, Intermediate, Senior)

Group Size: 25-30

Time Line: 20 minutes

Equipment Needed: squares of construction paper (15 cm) with a symbol drawn on each (one for each participant)

Space Required: students need to sit together

Activity Description:

1. To begin, pass the cards out to all the students face down.
2. Instruct the students not to look at them until they are told.
3. Select a student to begin a story by turning over his/her own symbol card and including that symbol or its meaning into his/her story.
4. Following this, the person to the storyteller’s left takes over the story, and turns over his/her symbol ready to include that concept or symbol into the story.
5. When the story reaches the last person, he/she must end the story including their symbol.

Build A Better Bathtub (Primary, Junior, Intermediate, Senior)

Group Size: 30

Time Line: 20 minutes

Equipment Needed: felt markers, large sheets of paper

Space Required: classroom - group seating plan

Activity Description:

1. Establish groups.
2. Appoint a recorder. --
3. Review rules of brainstorming.

4. Outline task - Instruct groups they have 5 minutes to call out and write down as many ideas on the subject "How to design a better bathtub - enjoyment, efficiency, comfort.
5. Recorder jots notes.
6. Stop at 5 minutes. Recorders read list.
7. Discussion, reflection, appreciation.
8. Draw a new Tub

5 Minute Mystery (Primary, Junior, Intermediate, Senior)

Group Size: groups of 3

Time Line: 7 minutes

Equipment Needed: book - 5 Minute Mysteries by Ken Sobol

Space Required: classroom

Activity Description:

1. A person reads the mystery.
2. A person records.
3. A person encourages.
4. A person probes.
5. The group comes up with ideas to solve the mystery.

Fortunately..... Unfortunately(Primary, Junior, Intermediate, Senior)

Group Size: 3-4

Time Line: varies (could end up publishing story for self or primary class)

Equipment Needed: large paper, markers (vaness)

Space Required: classroom

Activity Description:

- 1 Brainstorm - good luck things/bad luck things.
2. Start story with a good luck sentence and continue:
 - Fortunately I won a million dollars.
 - Unfortunately I was robbed.
 - Fortunately I have some clues to give to the police. and so on .. (length will vary)

Word Warm-Up (Primary, Junior, Intermediate, Senior)

Group Size: variable

Time Line: pairs

Equipment Needed: paper/pens - put grid on board

Space Required: desks

Activity Description:

4x4 grid

1. Find as many words as you can in a time period. Letters must touch, etc. Add rules as needed.
2. Use list of words; highlight 5 words; write a good sentence.
letters at random or use hidden word

Standing Ovation (Primary, Junior, Intermediate, Senior)

Group Size: any size

Time Line: 1-2 minutes

Equipment Needed: none

Space Required: no additional

Activity Description:

1. Whenever there is a call for recognition, i.e. someone has mastered a particular skill, someone's birthday, an improved math score, someone doing a good deed for another, etc., recognize that person by giving them a standing ovation.
2. This will need explaining initially.
3. Extremely successful for self-esteem!

Line Ups (Primary, Junior, Intermediate, Senior)

Group Size: any size determined by organizer divided into 2 lines

Time Line: 5 minutes.

Equipment Needed: none or chairs can be used

Space Required: enough to form a long line

Activity Description:

1. People line up in a line facing each other.
2. One side of the line has 30 seconds to tell the other side of the line something about themselves, etc.

3. After 30 seconds people on one side of the line shift/space and tell the person opposite them something about themselves. (This could be a problems a celebration, etc.)

Happy Intros (beginning of school year)

Group Size: class

Time Line: n/a

Equipment Needed: n/a

Space Required: classroom

Activity Description:

1. Each student, in turn, stands up and tells his/her name and one thing that makes him/her happy.
2. Next, students go into groups of three and decide on one thing that makes all of them happy.
3. They then share this with the whole class.

Between Inning Stretch (Primary, Junior, Intermediate, Senior)

Group Size: whole class

Time Line: 1-5 minutes

Equipment Needed: kid&

Space Required: classroom

Activity Description:

1. Students and teachers recite the following and perform actions.
Touch your nose, touch your toes- See how far your fingers grow. (Stretch with arms at full extension, as are fingers.)
2. Mix up instructions, e.g. nose, toes, nose, toes, fingers grow

Group Listening Activity - “The Little Old Man (Primary, Junior, Intermediate, Senior)

Group Size: whole class

Time Line: 3-5 minutes

Equipment Needed: none (story attached)

Space Required:

Activity Description:

1. Divide class into 4 groups.
2. Assign each group to stand and make a particular sound when it hears its cue words-

Cue Words	Sounds
tire	whirr, whirr
windshield wipers	swish, swish
horn	honk, honk
engine	vroom, vroom

The Little Old Man

Not too long ago, there lived a little old man. His house was quite a distance from town. Whenever he needed groceries, the little old man had to walk several miles to the nearest store. One day, the little old man's shopping took longer than usual. It was nearly dusk before he began his long journey home.

The little old man had walked about a mile when he came upon four tires in the road. The little old man thought it strange that someone would leave four tires in the middle of the road, but he continued toward home. Behind him, he could hear the tires going whirr, whirr.

As the little old man approached a grove of trees, he noticed a pair of windshield wipers caught on a tree branch. The night breeze jiggled the windshield wipers. The windshield wipers caught on a tree branch. The night breeze jiggled the windshield wipers. The windshield wipers went swish, swish. The little old man hurried past the windshield wipers and whispered to himself that he was not afraid. But behind him he could hear the tires going whirr, whirr, and the windshield wipers going swish, swish.

Rounding a bend in the road, the little old man came upon a horn. The horn was going honk, honk. The little old man began to run. Behind him, he could hear the tires going whirr, whirr, the windshield wipers going swish, swish, and the horn going honk, honk.

The little old man kept telling himself he was not afraid. His house was a short distance away. As he ran toward the front door, he tripped over a car engine. The engine was going vroom, vroom.

'What is going on?' asked the little old man. I've walked by four tires going whirr, whirr, a pair of windshield wipers going swish, swish, a horn going honk, honk and now there's an engine in my front yard going vroom, vroom. Well, maybe I can put all of this junk to good use. With that thought in mind, the little old man went to his garage. He got out some tools and began tinkering.

At sunrise the little old man stopped. In front of him stood a contraption that resembled a car. It was made out of odds and ends and the car parts that had followed him home.

Now, let's drive to town,' said the little old man. As he drove down the road, you could hear four tires going whirr, whirr, a pair of windshield wipers going swish, swish, a horn going honk, honk, an engine going vroom, vroom, and a little old man laughing.

Pictionary (Primary, Junior, Intermediate, Senior)

Group Size: class of 30, 5 teams of 6 people

Time Line: varies

Equipment Needed: markers and paper, list of concepts, ideas, or things to be drawn

Space Required: classroom

Activity Description:

1. The group is divided into co-operative teams.
2. Each group is given a list of things, concepts or ideas that they must draw. E.g. All number 1 on each team must draw the same thing, all number 2's, etc
3. Team members must guess what their team member is drawing.
4. This can be done in the form of a relay race.

Communicating Without Words

Group Size: Teams of 2-4

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment Needed: markers and paper, list of concepts, ideas, or things to be drawn

Space Required: classroom

Activity Description:

1. You need to communicate yet you can not use words, written or spoken. What are 12 or more ways you might communicate without using words?
2. If thinking about a particular message or idea to communicate helps you do. I suggest you not concern yourself with what, rather how might you/we.
3. Here's a sample
 - sign language
 - bells
 - drums
 - hanging objects on water towers (hoboes did this in the 30's)
 - handshake
 - pointing
 - gesturing
 - grunting
 - shoulder movements
 - flashlights, headlights, candles
 - cartoons
 - painting
 - symbols in snow

"What Ifing?"

Group Size: Teams of 2-4

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment Needed: markers and paper, list of concepts, ideas, or things to be drawn

Space Required: classroom

Activity Description:

Create your own list of one dozen or more "fantasy questions" or perhaps use some of these:

1. What if we humans had noses in the front of our faces and the end of one of our fingers?
2. What if we could use grass instead of petroleum to run our cars?
3. What if clouds were really a form of food?
4. What if we could control sunsets every night?
5. What if everyone wore exactly the same clothes all the time?
6. What if we could read through osmosis?
7. What if bicycles had hexagon-shaped wheels?
8. What if trees grew upside down?
9. What if elevators went up and down and side to side?
10. What if laser printers could print in white ink?
11. What if my keyboard automatically typed the language of the reader no matter what language I was typing?
12. What if every school required 2 hours of laughing every day?

The end result of this is a list of 12 "fantasy question" not answers or solutions. That could come later.... In this activity we want to get the students opening their minds to new possibilities and to listen, talk and have fun.