

Community Juggling

This is a great icebreaker and name game that helps build teams and encourage individual reflection. It also provides a terrific springboard for introducing complex inter-relationships or non-linear processes.



MATERIALS:

- Several (6-8) soft objects (tennis balls, koosh balls, small plush toys, beanie babies, etc.)

EXPERIENCE:

- Ask everyone to form a circle, facing inward about elbow width apart, with their hands cupped in front of them. Tell them to pay close attention to the pattern that will be established.
- Call someone's name and toss an object to him/her. Ask him/her to say "thanks <your name>" and choose someone else to toss it to, emphasizing the importance of gaining their attention before throwing anything. Repeat the process until all participants have received the object and it finally returns to you.
- Note that "things aren't usually that simple, so let's try it again and see what happens". After the first object has been received and passed on to the second in the sequence, get the first person's attention again and toss another object. Repeat until all objects have been returned to you.

REFLECTION:

- What can you do to balance your various priorities and numerous tasks?
- How do you react when someone else "drops the ball"? How do you recover when you "drop the ball"?
- Might your students be similarly overwhelmed with "items" tossed their way from different directions?
- How do we deal with the great numbers of options available to us in this "information age"?
- What implications does this activity have for non-linear learning, specifically using the Internet in teaching?
- What if all who handled an "item" focused on that specific issue, taking into account the others' perspectives?

PROCESSING:

1. If you happened to look into the center of the circle, what did you see?
2. As an individual, what did you do that worked or didn't work?
3. As a group, what did you all do that worked or didn't work?
4. With respect to your teaching, what might these different objects represent?
Think about how you deal with things that come at you from unexpected directions.
Reverse the sequence! You toss the object to the last person who tossed it to you.
5. Are there any other "items" that make your role as a teacher easier or harder?
Having successfully managed this activity, think about what you might try to better deal with those "items".

It's ironic that the one constant in our society is "change". Technology literally advances daily. Specific skills quickly become obsolete. Teachers are faced with different scenarios each semester. We must learn to select/apply appropriate tools and develop/adapt to relevant resources.

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- Snow, Harrison. (1997). *Indoor/outdoor Team-building Games for Trainers*. New York, NY. McGraw-Hill. pp. 109, 111.