

Magnificent 7 Communication Games

Activity

1. Oh, Cabjous Day!

Divide students into three groups. Tell the groups that they all have a common goal: to put together a jigsaw puzzle(50-100 pieces or less!) in a limited amount of time. However, each group speaks a different language from the other groups. Each group's language consists of only one word. Assign each group a nonsense word. For example, you might assign **Group 1** the word cariffle ; **Group 2** woobidee ; and **Group 3** varipipip.

Divide the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle among the three groups. Tell groups they have two minutes to plan how they want to communicate with the other groups to put together the puzzle. During this planning phase, group members may communicate freely with one another. **When the groups join together to build the puzzle, the only words that may be spoken are the nonsense words assigned to each group.** For example, **Group 1** may only say cariffle while members of **Group 2** may only say woobidee. **Group 3** may only use their word varipipip.

Students must rely on varying the **variety, quality, rate, and volume of their vocal communication** in order to accomplish their goal.

Give groups five minutes to try to put the puzzle together. Remind them to only use their assigned word and to try to communicate by **varying their vocal characteristics**. Ask students to share their insights on what happened during the activity. Discuss how students were able to communicate vocally, even when the words they were required to use were nonsense. Ask:

- *What does this tell us about the power of vocal tone, quality, rate and volume of voice?*

Objectives

- Gain a greater understanding of the keys to effective communication
- Practice good communication skills with increasing clarity and consistency.
- Develop feedback skills.
- Learn the importance of effective listening skills.

Materials

Carefully read the selected communication exercise. Select game(s). Gather what may be needed for the implementation. Predict the level of interest and participation by students. Also anticipate the amount of time to be delegated to a selected game.

What else will fit the class period? Look at the two SW found in the file, under SW C. The SW C on Participating With Others is timely to use now, before assigning a game.

You may then introduce a game by reviewing the goals of effective communication; review the vocabulary, key to success of the games.

Prepare for a discussion at the end of the class period.

Vocabulary

- Communication
- Teamwork
- Cooperative
- Following Directions
- Effective Listening

2. I See What You are Saying

Divide students into groups of three. Near each group, place two chairs back to back. Ask two students to sit in the chairs. Tell the third student to face one of the sitting students. Ask the sitting student facing the standing student to describe a funny situation he or she has experienced. The person sitting with his or her back to the speaker should listen closely. The person facing the storyteller should carefully observe the speaker's facial expressions, gestures, and other nonverbal movements.

Tell the person who sat with his or her back to the speaker to report to his or her group what the story was. Tell groups to compare perceptions of the student who watched the speaker and the participant who only listened. Discuss the following questions with the entire group:

- *Did the observers see and hear the same message as the listener? Why or why not?*
- *How did the speakers feel knowing that their words and actions were being closely monitored? In real-life situations, how do you handle feelings of being watched by others as you speak?*
- *How does nonverbal communication affect communication with employees with disabilities such as visual impairments or hearing impairments?*

3. What's In It For Me?

Before the class session, choose a short article from a newspaper, magazine, or journal to share with the class. The subject isn't important, but the article should have a lot of details in it. Casually mention at the beginning of a class period that you read an interesting article and would like to share it with them. Read the article to the class. After you've finished reading the article, pull out a dollar bill and say, "Okay, I've got a few questions for you based on the article you just heard. Whoever gets all the questions right wins this dollar!" Have each student take out a blank sheet of paper. Ask students eight to ten questions based on details from the article. Ask them to write the answers on the sheet of paper. Have students switch papers, and then tell them the answers. Ask if anyone knew the answers to all of the questions. It is unlikely that any one person will have answered all of the questions correctly. Give the dollar bill to the student with the most correct answers. Say to students, "You all heard the story, yet few of you could remember very much about it." Ask students: "Why didn't you remember much after listening to the story?" Discuss how they could improve their listening skills and whether they would have listened more attentively if they had known **ahead of time** that there would be a prize. Discuss how the four stages of active listening could have helped them.

4. Game Shows

Divide students into three teams. Ask Team A to prepare a six-question short-answer quiz on vocal communication. Allow five minutes. Ask Teams B and C to review their class notes on the topic while Team A prepares its quiz. Tell Team A to ask Team B one of its questions. If Team B cannot answer the question or answers incorrectly, Team C may try to answer the question. Team A directs its next question to Team C first and repeats the process. Team A continues to ask questions until the quiz is done.

Notes for Teachers

SW C "Participating with Others" may be an appropriate lead-in to the day's activities.

These Magnificent 7 Games are also suitable for other lessons as reinforcement or effective communication skills

Reflection

Remember a time when you had to make another try at communicating effectively and were successful the second time. What went wrong the first time? As you remember, describe the details in your journal.

Home Connection

Ask a parent or relative a reflection question:

Tell about what they have learned over the years about good and bad communication. Take notes. Share with the class the next day.

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Ask Team B to prepare a similar quiz on verbal communication. Ask Teams A and C to

Remind the listening partner in each pair to use the active listening techniques you have taught (such as mirroring, paraphrasing, summarizing, self-disclosure, and clarifying questions). Spend a minute or two with each pair to make sure they are using active listening skills correctly. Offer praise or suggestions for improvement when necessary. Ask each pair to demonstrate to another pair their effective use of active listening skills.

5. Listen to What I Hear

Ask two volunteers to give you directions to their homes. Practice good listening techniques with the first person and poor listening techniques with the second. Ask students what you did that showed you were a good listener in the first example, and what you did that showed you were a poor listener in the second.

6. Communication Skills through Drawing (this game is also SW A- Buddy Communicating)

Materials required:

- drawing paper (two to three sheets per student)
- pens or pencils
- a clock or watch

This activity is excellent for developing students' communication skills; it demonstrates the importance of listening and asking the right questions (inquiry skills).

Arrange students into pairs. Have each pair of students sit at their desks back-to-back, with the writing surfaces of their desks in front of them. Tell students that one of them will be Student "A" and the other will be Student "B." Have students in each pair choose one of the letters.

After students have chosen their letters, ask each student to write his or her letter in the top corner of a blank sheet of paper. Next, instruct all "A's" to spend two minutes drawing something on their papers. Students need not be good at drawing; even stick drawings will suffice for this activity. (Partners may not look at or talk to each other during this part of the activity.) While "A's" are drawing, "B's" should remain in their seats. At the end of the two-minute drawing period, instruct "A's" to put down their pens/pencils.

Next, tell "B's" to pick up their pens/pencils. Instruct "A's" to give a clear description of their drawings to their respective partners. Instruct "B's" to *listen only* to their partners' instructions. Each "B" will use the oral instructions to try to re-create his or her partner's drawing. Allow five minutes for this next step. Remember: The only means of

communication is for each "A" to provide description of the drawing to his or her partner. "B's" can only listen and draw. Partners should remain sitting back-to-back at all times during this part of the activity. At the end of the five-minute time period, instruct "B's" to put down their pens/pencils.

Allow a few minutes for partners to show each other their drawings and discuss the results.

For the next part of the activity, instruct partners to resume their back-to-back positions. Provide each student with a clean sheet of drawing paper and tell students that the second part of the activity will be different from the first part. Then have "B's" spend three minutes drawing on their papers. Students should use the entire three minutes to draw something beyond a simple shape or two. When the three minutes are up, "B's" should put down their pens/pencils.

Remind all pairs to remain seated back-to-back. Instruct all "A's" to prepare to draw. Tell students that this time the "A's" are going to reproduce their partners' drawings, but the only way they can obtain information about those drawings is by asking yes or no questions. Emphasize that only questions that can be answered yes or no are allowed! Allow students five minutes to complete this part of the activity. When time is up, have partners compare their drawings.

Summary:

After completion of the selected game(s), the teacher may ask...

- *What were the difficulties that you experienced?*
- *What were the successes that you had?*
- *Which way of communicating was more difficult? Why?*
- *What about the importance of effective communication? Do you feel a little differently?*
- *What were the requirements for each partner/team to communicate effectively?*

Students can conclude in a discussion with the teacher that **effective communication requires cooperation, honest listening, clear instructions, respect for one another, clarifying questions, proper feedback, and openness to divergent opinions.**