

TEAM-BUILDING GAMES THAT PROMOTE COLLABORATIVE CRITICAL THINKING

I. If You Build it...

This team-building game is flexible. Simply divide students into teams and give them equal amounts of a certain material, like pipe cleaners, blocks, or even dried spaghetti and marshmallows. Then, give them something to construct. The challenge can be variable (think: Which team can build the tallest, structurally-sound castle? Which team can build a castle the fastest?).

You can recycle this activity throughout the year by adapting the challenge or materials to specific content areas.

Skills: Communication; problem-solving

2. Save the Egg

This activity can get messy so students should be able to follow safety guidelines when working with raw eggs. Teams must work together to find a way to “save” the egg – in this case an egg dropped from a specific height. That could involve finding the perfect soft landing, or creating a device that guides the egg safely to the ground. Let their creativity work here. (Students should have access to usual stationery supplies, e.g. tape, paper, etc. as well as cotton wool, piece of fabric, newspaper or whatever might be suitable; limit the number of materials if you want to make it more difficult)

Skills: Problem-solving, creative collaboration

3. Zoom

Zoom is a classic classroom cooperative game that never seems to go out of style. Simply form students into a circle and give each a unique picture of an object, animal or whatever else suits your fancy. You begin a story that incorporates whatever happens to be on your assigned photo. The next student continues the story, incorporating their photo, and so on.

Skills: Communication; creative collaboration

4. Minefield

Another classic team-building game. Arrange some sort of obstacle course and divide students into teams. Students take turns navigating the “mine field” while blindfolded, with only their

teammates to guide them. You can also require students to only use certain words or clues to make it challenging or content-area specific.

Skills: Communication; trust

5. The Worst-Case Scenario

Fabricate a scenario in which students would need to work together and solve problems to succeed, like being stranded on a deserted island or getting lost at sea. Ask them to work together to concoct a solution that ensures everyone arrives safely. You might ask them to come up with a list of 10 must-have items that would help them most, or a creative passage to safety. Encourage them to vote – everyone must agree to the final solution.

Skills: Communication, problem-solving

6. A Shrinking Vessel

This game requires a good deal of strategy in addition to team work. Its rules are deceptively simple: The entire group must find a way to occupy a space that shrinks over time, until they are packed creatively like sardines. You can form the boundary with a rope, a tarp or blanket being folded over or small traffic cones. (Skills: Problem-solving; teamwork)

7. Go for Gold

This game is similar to the “If you build it” game: Teams have a common objective, but instead of each one having the same materials, they have access to a whole cache of materials. For instance, the goal might be to create a contraption with pipes, rubber tubing and pieces of cardboard that can carry a marble from point A to point B in a certain number of steps, using only gravity.

Creative collaboration; communication; problem-solving

8. It's a Mystery

We all enjoy a good mystery, so why not design one that must be solved cooperatively? Give each student a numbered clue. In order to solve the mystery – say, the case of the missing mascot – students must work together to solve the clues in order. The “case” might require them to move from one area of the room to the next, uncovering more clues.

http://www.teampedia.net/wiki/index.php?title=Category:Name_Games