



GROUP SHAPES

Number of players: 10 +

Space: Open space

Materials needed: None

Procedure:

Designate a playing space and ask the group to walk around it without talking or making contact with any of the other players until they are instructed to do so. If useful, have players stretch their arms, reach for the ceiling, and/or shake out as they wander round the space. Encourage them to speed up their pace [without bumping into others] and then to slow down. Ask everyone to freeze and tell them that they have a mission: when you say “Go” they are to make three triangles in the space using their bodies as quickly as they can — without talking. Once they have succeeded, congratulate the group and ask them to once again move around the space individually and wait for their next mission. Have them form different shapes [squares, circle, rectangle, etc.], or combinations of shapes [2 triangles and 1 circle; a circle inside a square, etc.] or even letters, words, or numbers.

Possible side coaching:

- “How will you solve the problem without talking?”
- “You need to work together to solve the problem – or your mission will fail.”
- “What can you do to make sure others can tell what shape you have created?”

Variations:

To increase the level of difficulty, ask the students to make a group shape with an odd number of feet on the floor [5,3, or 1 foot total, etc.]; or a group shape where one member of the group is not touching the floor; or a group circle connecting with knees, elbows, toes, knuckles, or any other part of the body; or a group square, circle, rectangle, or triangle with all group members’ eyes closed. [This one sounds easy but is very difficult!]

Processing points:

- What was the easiest part of this exercise?
- What was the most difficult? Why?
- How did you manage to communicate with one another?
- What does it take to solve problems like this?
- How might those skills help us in our classroom?

Possible learning areas:

Problem solving, cooperation, non-verbal communication, group dynamics.

AKA: Shape Shifters

Source: Augusto Boal, Michael Rohd, and Peace Games