

Group Initiative- Count to 20

Purpose: To get a group to work together through responsive listening. This relates to the cycle theme Purposeful Collaboration because it helps exercise the skills needed to work effectively in a group. Waiting your turn; not just staying quiet, but listening; reacting to body language; anticipating rather than reacting; putting aside individual needs and working towards the greater good--these are skills applicable to much of the work that we do in class, particularly Seminar and table group work. And just like any skill, you get better with practice.

Explain: In the past, I've used this improv exercise to prepare students for seminar, presentations, and performance. I have never made the connections to group work, but I think creating AOP questions that make direct connections to our cycle theme and our work in collaborative groups will help make this even more meaningful.

Materials: A space large enough for students to stand in a circle, an object to use as a focus

Procedure:

1. Students stand in a circle. (While one variation of the game requires physical touching, this isn't necessary.)
2. The goal of this activity is to count to 20 (or any number your group may choose). The catch is that only one person can count at a time. If two people say a number at the same time, the group must begin at 1 again.
3. Round 1: assign a student to say 1, then go around the circle. "Too easy, right?"
4. Round 2: tell students to skip, so only every other student counts.
5. Round 3: use names. Tell the next person when to go. "3. Kristin!" Choose someone across the circle.
6. Round 4: Now you can't use names. Use eye contact and body language.
7. Round 5: Now you can't use eye contact. Everyone in the circle must focus on an object in the center of the circle.
8. Repeat any rounds as many times as desired.

AOP:

1. What helped us be successful during this game? (And "success" isn't just "winning")
2. What strategies did we need in order to work together?
3. What other strategies could we use to get better at this game?
4. How could this activity help us in seminar?
5. Does collaboration create community, or is it the other way around?