

Missing Pieces

A classic (physical) exercise which can be used to explore collaboration, teamwork, problem-solving, negotiation and achieving objectives. You'll need around 15-30 minutes for this exercise, depending on complexity of jigsaw and level of debrief.

Preparation

You'll need 3 or 4 children's jigsaws of similar design (but not the same picture) Those with 24 or 48 pieces are ideal depending on the time you have.

Prior to running the exercise (and unseen from delegates) place a couple of pieces from each box into a different box.

The Activity

Split delegates into 3 or 4 teams and give each a jigsaw to complete. Tell them it's a race. There are 10 points to the team who completes it first (or maybe a packet of biscuits), 5 points for the second (or a packet of sweets), 3 for third and 0 for last (or something like that)

You can impose whatever rules you like – must take turns to fit a piece, the person who finds a piece can't be the person who fits it, only half the group can touch and the other half talk, in small groups only one person can fit, two can sort and one can spot – whatever you like (as long as it's not too complex).

Set them off and observe the behaviours.

- What happens when they realise that they don't have the right pieces to complete the puzzle?
- What do they do when they realise other teams have their pieces?
- Do they negotiate? Steal? Collaborate?
- Do they focus on winning or achieving the task?

NOTE: *You MAY choose to set up a formal negotiation with a representative of each group – especially if negotiation (and trust) is one of the things you are exploring. How do they reach agreement and do they stick to it, or go against it?*

Of course, it is possible for the teams to co-ordinate so everyone fits the last piece at the last time and so getting maximum points.