



## ACTIVITY: 'BRIDGING THE GAPS'

**TIME:** Approx. 15+ minutes  
**SIZE:** Groups of three or four  
**SPACE:** Two desks per group  
**RESOURCES:** Several newspapers, one roll of sticky tape per group, ruler, scissors, cricket ball

**The aim** is for students to problem solve as a group.

**The result** should be first-hand appreciation of how important skills like good communication, helpful self-talk, and cooperation are to the functioning of successful groups.

1. Break the class into groups of three or four students.
2. Explain that each group must build a bridge between two desks using nothing but newspaper and tape. The bridge must span a 20 cm gap, it must be free standing (i.e. not taped to either desk) and must support the weight of a cricket ball. You may choose to limit the pages of newspaper to, say, 15 sheets per group.
3. Groups get five minutes to plan and then five minutes to construct their bridges. Start the clock!  
NB: The pressured mood can be enhanced by playing music, such as an orchestral march.
4. When 10 minutes have elapsed, give the groups one extra minute to decide a name for their bridges. Then, go around one-by-one with the cricket ball to test each bridge.
5. Commence class discussion.

## DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS



- How were responsibilities allocated within your group?
- What did you think about these decisions? How did they make you feel?
- What did you think about your group before the clock started? What did you think about your own abilities to achieve your task?
- What, if anything, went wrong within your group? Why did that happen? What could you have done differently?
- What went right? Why?
- What was your opinion of your group after the clock stopped?
- What did you learn about your own abilities?