



ACTIVITY: 'INTERFEROMETRICALLY'

TIME: 10–15 minutes
SIZE: For pairs (but can be engaging for groups of any size)
SPACE: For pairs to work
RESOURCES: Pen, paper, dictionary

The aim is to place students in a situation where achieving a goal is difficult due to uncertainty.

The result should be fruitful discussion about the value of helpful thinking in changing situations.

1. Break the class into pairs and seat pair/s opposite one another.
2. Flip a coin or 'paper-scissors-rock' to determine which partner goes first.
3. The 'first' student will say a letter of the alphabet (e.g. 'b').
4. The other must then add a letter in an attempt to spell a word (e.g. 'e').
5. The pair go back and forth adding letters – e.g. b-e-a-c-h ...
6. The aim is NOT to be the last person stuck on the word, i.e. to keep adding letters to create legitimate words (e.g. b-e-a-c-h-s-i-d-e-s). However, the person who finds they can add no more letters is the loser of the round.
7. Continue to choose a winner: best out of three or five rounds.
8. A Dictionary is handy to have as adjudicator. Someone suggesting a letter that will result in a misspelt word (e.g. a-p-p-r-o-p-r-e) loses the round.



DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

- This activity is about reaching a goal despite the unpredictability of circumstances (i.e. what the other person might come up with). Naturally, this activity suited people who are good spellers. But what other thinking skills were useful?
- Were there any people who thought unhelpfully when the activity was announced (e.g. people for whom spelling is not a strong point)? What thoughts went through your head? Were these unhelpful thoughts an asset in the activity? Why not?
- In what ways can unhelpful thoughts undermine your Sense of Purpose? How can unhelpful (especially self-critical) thoughts prevent you from reaching goals?
- Brainstorm some real-life circumstances where helpful thinking can build Sense of Purpose, and where unhelpful thinking can knock down or diminish Sense of Purpose (e.g. when preparing for a job interview).