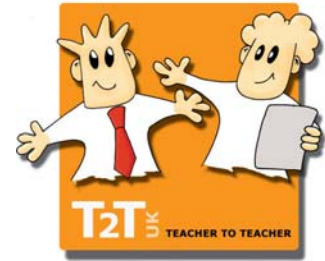


# Games For ClassBuilding, Teambuilding and Energising



See report at bottom of document 'Not At All!'

**T** = teacher, **S** = students, **IT** = person who is 'on', **CB** = Classbuilder, **TB** = Teambuilder, **E** = Energiser, **IB** = Ice Breakers, **F** = Funner, **C** = Closer for plenary

- Critical aspects of **Classbuilding** = 'standing', 'walking around', work with kids not on your current team, at least 1 per week, can be academic/content
- Critical aspects of **Teambuilding** = Fun!!, non academic or easy enough for low ability, at least 2 per week

## Around the World **CB, E**

Everyone stands up, T or S asks a question, if you know the answer take steps around the room, each question is worth steps depending on how hard the question. Goal to get right round the room, 'the world' and back to your seat before end of questions. Good for spatial kinaesthetic learners.

## Balance Games **TB, E**

Work with partner, invent position when alone you would fall, together you are balanced, share balances with class, pair up with another pair, come up with 4 person balances.

## Magic 11 **TB, E**

Excellent class builder Luck, logic or telepathy, how do we reach 'Magic 11'. Groups of S 4-6, circle, one hand as fist in middle, call "1,2,3, eleven", on count of three all open fists to reveal zero, 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 fingers. Add up all fingers shown in-group try to get 11. If get to 11, celebrate/congratulate pick another number and go again. Good brain break and energiser. Easy to do kids love it.

## Mirror Mirror **TB, E**

Excellent partner builder. Find a partner, face each other. Pretend you are looking into a mirror, to music, slow deliberate, funky etc, make corresponding moves, switch roles. Take it in turns without verbally agreeing to lead or to follow.

## MirthQuake **CB, E**

Excellent class builder Kids love this, don't use too often as colleagues wonder 'what the hell?', S pretend to laugh as hard as they can, NO sound, slap knees etc, grab

stomach. after 30 seconds, on signal from T everyone let loose with sounds of real thing!! After 10 seconds go extremely silent, the rest of the school will be asking what went on in your class, it gives S real sense of class pride and belonging believe it or not.

### Meet you at the Pass **CB, E**

Excellent class builder Obj. Pass two balls so that one catches up with the other. 2 large balls, S's in a circle. Start one ball on one side of circle, one on the other, S pass ball from each other round circle, T can call "reverse" S's make balls change direction.

### Robots **CB, E**

S's choose a 'robot master', robots (other 3 teammates) move off shuffling in a straight line making 'beep beep' sounds as they go., robots can only travel in straight lines when 'bump' onto object, table, wall etc. robots get stuck and begin softly shouting " help \_\_\_\_\_ ( name of robot master), if the robot master does not get to you straight away robots can begin to shout louder and louder, Robot master catches up with 'robots' and resets them in a new direction. The fun comes from trying to keep up with all your robots as all the other teams are doing the same. This is a very cool game

### Personality Indicator **CB, IB**

10 minutes, 1 pencil, 1 paper for each S. Working solo at desk. 1, S choose favourite colour and then describe it with 3 adjectives. 2, Choose their favourite animal and then describe it with 3 adjectives. Choose their favourite body of water and then describe it with 3 adjectives. Share info with team or partner. Analysis \_ descriptors of favourite colour describe how you see yourself, descriptors of favourite animal describe how others see you, descriptors of favourite body of water describe how you view nature.

### Autographs **CB**

10 mins, sheet of paper with about 20 likes/dislikes, preferences, activities (like find someone who..) S receive an autograph sheet eg. 1. likes to ski, 2. owns a batman t-shirt, 3. loves computers etc., In ten mins must get others to sign their sheet next to an activity they do. S cannot write name more than once on same sheet. Share with team/partner if desired.

### SILENT BALL **TB, E**

You will need a small, soft ball for this game. Explain that the object of the game is to see how many times you can toss the ball without talking. Look at the person you are throwing the ball to so they will be ready. Silently count how many times we can throw the ball without talking or dropping it. If someone talks or drops the ball, then the game begins all over again. Hint! Wad up a scrap piece of paper and use it in lieu of a ball.

### JUGGLING **TB, E**

S's can improve eye-hand coordination and cross the midline by juggling scarves, paper towels, or wadded up paper balls. Begin by having S's toss up and catch one ball or scarf. Can they toss it and catch it one time? Can they toss it, clap and catch it? Can they toss it, turn around, and catch it? Add a second ball or scarf and see what they can do. Try juggling to music.

### Eraser Chaser **CB, E**

'Balance' game. T selects an IT. IT walks about, board rubber balanced on head., IT selects another S ( CB rules = choose a S from another team.) by placing another board rubber on the desk in front of S. This S becomes the chaser. Chaser places board

rubber on their head and sets out to tag IT. It attempts to make big lap of classroom and sit in chasers chair. If IT tagged, start again. If IT is safe, chaser becomes new IT. Perhaps a forfeit after IT is tagged twice on run. After playing let S's design rule changes.

### **Toss-A-Name Game TB, E,IB**

**Props:** Balls and other soft throwing items (rubber chickens, nerf balls/ stress balls etc.)

**Procedure:** With the group standing in a circle, have students go around saying their names. Then show them a ball, and explain the activity this way: .First I will say my name, like .I am Adam.. Then I will say, .and this is Nadem.. Then I will throw the ball to Nadem. Nadem will say, .That is Adam, I am Nadem, and this is Tannisha.. And so on, until all the names in the circle are strung onto the list.. The game goes until everyone has been called, without anyone being repeated. If someone's name is forgot, have the group spot them. Variations include going around multiple times, attempting to beat the last speed (kept with a stopwatch). Another version is to have multiple balls flying at the same time, spaced apart by 2 or 3 people.

### **I'm Seeking Common Ground IB, CB, E**

**Props:** Enough chairs for all participants, minus one.

**Procedure:** Group sits in a circle of chairs with one person standing in the middle (no empty chairs). The person in the middle says .I seek common ground with. people who were born outside of Macclesfield. Anyone who was, including the person asking the question, must get up and run across the circle to find a new seat. You can't take the seat of the person next to you! There will be one person left in the middle who must ask the next question. Possibilities include: people who. wear glasses! Likes vanilla ice cream better than chocolate! You can also guide the questions a little deeper. .I seek common ground with people who've love to learn. The teacher may ask the first few questions to get the game going and set the tone

### **The Name Game TB**

**Props:** None

**Procedure:** Get the group in a circle. Tell everyone to get an adjective starting with the first letter of their own first name and add it to the front of their first name [Adventurous Adam]. Then, introduce yourself, and tell the person next to you to introduce you then himself/herself. Each person farther down the circle will then introduce everybody in front of them then finally, himself/herself.

### **Find Your Type IB**

**Props:** Sets of 3x5 cards with matching animals, enough for each person to have a card

**Procedure:** Get the group in a circle. Tell everyone they may not speak. Give each person a card with an animal on it. Tell them to find their mates by doing something that animal would do. Start them all at the same time.

### Line Up By... **IB, CB**

Props: Blindfolds

Procedure: There are many variations on the "Line Up By...." challenges. The basic idea is to have the group line up in a straight line according to some specific criteria and with some type of restriction on their actions. Here are some ideas that can be altered to meet your group's needs. Give specific guidelines before beginning.

**LINE UP BY HEIGHT - GIVE EVERYONE BLINDFOLDS. MAKE SURE THEY AGREE TO SPECIFIC SAFETY RULES SUCH AS NO PUSHING, MOVING SLOWLY, STOPPING WHEN THE INSTRUCTOR SAYS STOP, ETC. ONCE THE STUDENTS ARE BLINDFOLDED TELL THEM THEY MUST LINE UP ACCORDING TO HEIGHT, WITH THE SHORTEST PERSON IN THE FRONT, THE TALLEST IN THE BACK.**

Line up by birthday - Without talking or making any vocal sounds the students must line up according to birthday, January 1 at the front and December 31 at the back.

### People Bingo **CB, E, IB**

Materials Needed:    Pre-made Bingo Card  
                                 Pens/Pencils

#### Activity Steps:

Give each person a Bingo Sheet.

Instruct the group that when you say "Begin" they are to move around the room and find people who match the squares on their Bingo sheet.

When they find a person, that person should sign the Bingo square corresponding to that trait or idea.

Depending on the size of your group, you may put a limit on number of times any one person can sign the Bingo sheet. For example, if you have at least 25 students, you may want each person to sign one time per sheet. If you have 15, you may want to only each person to be able to sign no more than two times per sheet.

### Two Truths & A Fiction **TB, E**

Materials Needed:    3x5 Cards  
                                 Pens/Pencils

#### Activity Steps:

Give each person a 3x5 card.

Instruct them to write three statements...TWO statements should be true about themselves and ONE should be a lie.

Explain that the goal is to fool people about which is a lie.

Allow about five minutes to write the statements.

Have each person read their statements and the group RoundRobin guesses which is the lie giving their reasons for making this choice. Next the group come to consensus as to the 'fiction', When revealed, if the person was 'found' out he/she applauds the

team for correctly guessing, if the team are incorrect the team applaud the 'fiction' for fooling them.

### **Who Am I? CB,E**

**Materials Needed:** Pre-made list of people  
(Real or fictitious. see below) Tape

#### **Activity Steps:**

**Attach a name to the back of each person participating with tape.**

**Instruct the group to ask questions of the people in the room in order to figure out who they are.**

**Each person can only ask ONE question of each person in the room.**

**Questions can not be phrased as "Am I Bob Smith?"**

**Give the group examples of questions they could ask. Such as: Am I living or dead?**

**Am I real or fictitious? Am I male or female?**

**Sample list of possible people to use for this activity:**

**Wayne Rooney**

**Tony Blair**

**Winston Churchill**

**Henry VIII**

**George Washington**

**Fred Flintstone**

**Batman**

**Bugs Bunny**

**Van Gogh**

**Christopher Columbus**

### **Head of the Class CB, E**

**Materials Needed:** Premade Head of the Class Card  
Pens/Pencils

#### **Activity Steps:**

**Give each person a Head of the Class Sheet.**

**Instruct the group that when you say "Begin" they are to move around the room and find people who will perform the tasks on the sheet either individually or as a group.**

**When they find a person, that person should sign the line corresponding to that task. winners.**

### **The Candle E**

**Props: None**

**Purpose: Physical activity**

**Procedure: Each student balances on one foot, tucking the other up against the other thigh. Put palms together in front of the chest and, while keeping palms together, raise hands over the head. Close eyes and hands pass eye level. Maintain balance for ten to fifteen seconds. Switch legs and**

repeat.

### **People To People TB,IB,E**

**Props: None**

**Procedure:** Form pairs facing each other. A single player at the end of the line is designated the .caller.. As the caller yells .toe to toe,, .knee to knee,, .elbow to foot,, etc., the pairs perform the described connection. On the call .people to people. the players switch partners. The player without a new partner becomes the new caller. You can.t have the same partner twice, unless it.s a small group. And try to think of a new combination every time!

### **Human Knot CB,E**

**Props: None**

**Purpose:** Teambuilding, bending the personal space bubble, Communication

**Procedure:** Get the group in a tight circle. Have the members of the group reach in with their tight hands and grasp one of the right hands available. Repeat with left hands. Then ask them to unravel the knot. People may not let go. The circle of hands is to remain unbroken. However, it may be necessary to change grips due to the angle of arms and bodies. One variation is for the group to stay silent during the entire activity. Note: This activity may serve as a metaphor for community activism, illustrating an opportunity for broad perspectives to work together towards a common goal.

### **The Clock TB**

**Props: None**

**Purpose:** Planning, Communicating, and Teamwork

**Procedure:** Define a large circle by having the group join hands. Mark one spot inside the circle as .12 O.clock. and another as .6 O.clock.. Have the group rotate in one direction, returning to the start position, in as little time as possible. After discussing strategies, the group can try to improve its previous record.

### **Black Knight, White Knight TB,CB**

**Props: None**

**Purpose:** Team building and Communication

**Procedure:** Define a playing field appropriate for the size group. Tell everyone they are a knight. Appoint one person to be .The Black Knight.. Tell the knights that they can move like a knight in chess (define if necessary). Allow the white knights to move the black. If the black knight tags a white knight, the white knight becomes a black knight. Note: At the end of the game everyone will be a black knight.

### **Impulse TB**

**Props: None**

**Purpose:** Touching, Communication and Team building

**Procedure:** Have the group form a circle. Have the group hold hands around the circle. Ask them to send a pulse signal through the group. Time it. Challenge the group to do it faster. Note: If you allow them several opportunities to try this, make sure you have a timer that will display

hundredths of a second.

**Touch The Can (Because You Can-Can-Can!) TB, CB, E**

**Props:** A tin can

**Purpose:** Teamwork, communication, planning and touching

**Procedure:** Get the group around the can. Tell the group they all must be touching the can at once, with their. (finger, toe, knee, elbow, shoulder.).

**Variations:** Depending on the size of the group, use larger AND smaller items, and gradually get the group to come closer and closer together physically. T may have the group transport the object to a different area with a bizarre matching of body parts (imagine a group of 10 people carrying a plastic throwing disc across the room on their knees).

**The Lava Pit TB, E**

**Props:** 20 paper plates, masking tape.

**Purpose:** Teambuilding, Communication

**Procedure:** Make up a story that the group is being chased and they need to get across a field of hot lava. Give each group paper plates explaining that when they step on these plates they will not sink into the lava. (Give each team about 1/3 the number of plates as people.) The group must figure out how to get the entire group from point A to point B (both marked by masking tape on the floor), from one side of the Hot Lava Pit to the other. Only one person can be on a plate at a time, and the plates may be picked up and moved. The key to the game is that only part of the team will be able to cross the field at a time and one person will need to work their way back across the field to help the rest of the team across. A time limit can also be placed on this game.

**Bloop TB**

**Props:** Balloons (1 per group of 5)

**Purpose:** Teambuilding, Cooperation

**Procedure:** Break out large group into small groups of 4-6, and give each a balloon to inflate. In small group, join hands to and form circle. The objective is to keep the balloon off the floor by batting it, without letting go of hands. If the balloon touches the floor, the group losses its hands, meaning they can't let their hands touch the balloon; as balloon keeps hitting the floor, they loose elbows, shoulders, heads, thighs. T may have groups "carry" balloon across an area, or just have them work in one place for [X] amount of time.

**Pass The Toxic Waste Can TB**

**Props:** A soda can

**Purpose:** Teambuilding, Cooperation

**Procedure:** The group must form a circle, with each student spread about a meter apart. Introduce "The Toxic Waste Can" The challenge is for the group to pass the can around the circle without using their hands or dropping the can. The group will be more excited and engaged if there is imaginary "toxic" content in the can that will spill out if it is dropped.

### **Skin the Snake TB,E**

**Props: None**

**Purpose: Bursting Personal Space Bubbles, Communication, Trust, Team Building**

**Procedure: Have the group line up in a single file line facing forward. Tell the group to put their right hands between their legs. Next, tell them to take their left hands and grasp the right hand in front of them. Tell them that they have formed a snake and they must skin it without letting go of any hands. Tell them if they let go, they start over. Once the snake is skinned, tell them that they need to put the skin back on. Note: There may be large people who need some assistance getting up. Let the group work it out before you, as a T, get involved.**

### **Trust Circle(Willow in the Wind) TB,IB**

**Props: None**

**Purpose: Trust and Team Building**

**Procedure: Have the group form a circle. Have each student stand in a spotting stance. Ask for one person to get in the middle and be a faller. Be sure to close in the circle once a faller has entered into the center. Use the spotting commands. Have the faller fall all directions so all spotters are utilized. Allow everyone an opportunity to be a faller.**

### **Blinded Partner Walk TB**

**Props: Blindfolds (handkerchiefs or other non-see through fabric) for half of the group.**

**Purpose: Trust, Communication, Teamwork**

**Procedure: This can be done many different ways. Either the whole group can be blindfolded with a seeing leader or half the group or only a few can be blindfolded. The group must rely on each other to make it through the obstacle course or along the walk. Other situations can also be added. Members of the groups can be without the use of legs, arms, or speech.**

### **Cookie Machine TB,E,F**

**Props: None**

**Purpose: Trust, Teamwork, Communication**

**Procedure: Have the group form two lines facing each other. Have the students stand shoulder to shoulder in each line with their arms bent at the elbow and their palms up. The arms from each of the two lines should overlap. Place one person of the front of the cookie machine and have the group pass them back. Half way through the machine the cookie should be flipped.**

### **Caterpillar F**

**Props: None**

**Purpose: Fun, cooperation, bursting the personal space bubble**

**Procedure: The players lie on their stomachs, side to side, with their arms straight out in front. The person on the end begins to roll over the top of the**



row of bodies until he or she gets to the end. This can be done as a race, with two teams competing to get to a determined point.

### **Duo-Sit/Group Sit TB**

**Props:** None

**Purpose:** Teambuilding, cooperation

**Procedure:** For this challenge participants will work in pairs. Each group must stand back to back and link arms. From this position, the pair will attempt to sit down and stand back up without unlocking arms. When a pair succeeds, they should join with another pair and attempt the challenge with four people. Eventually, the group should work towards being able to complete the challenge with the entire group.

### **Yurt Circle TB,F**

**Props:** None

**Purpose:** Trust, teamwork, communication

**Procedure:** Choose a clear, open area for this activity, as participants are likely to fall forward and backwards. Participants should stand in a circle, facing inward and holding hands. Then, step backwards until everyone is stretched out but still able to have a firm grip on the two people whose hands they are holding. Everyone needs to keep their feet planted and lean back as far as they can. They must use the group to maintain their balance. Once they have done this, number off the group into 1s and 2s, alternating around the circle. Then, have the 1s lean in and the 2s lean out at the same time. Each person should be able to lean in or out while being held up by their neighbours.

### **The Lap Sit TB,F,E**

**Props:** None

**Purpose:** Teamwork, Communication, Bursting the personal space bubble

**Procedure:** Have everyone stand in one circle, arranging themselves so that someone about the same size as them is on either side of them. Everyone turns to the right. Step in closer to the center and put your hands on the waist of the person in front of you. Concentrate on the person in front of you sitting comfortably on your knees, and trust that the person behind you will guide you, too.. First do a trial run. On the count of three the group is going to bend down, touch bottoms to the knees and come right back up to make sure they are all standing closely enough together. Ready? 1, 2, 3... Then ask them to readjust their positions if necessary. Now we are going to sit down and then clap our hands... Again.... This activity usually amazes students by what they can do in cooperation.

### **Sardines F, TB**

**Props:** None

**Purpose:** Fun, teamwork

**Procedure:** This game can be played anywhere, indoors or out. The goal is similar to Hide and Seek, except that IT hides first. Everyone else then

tries to find .it.. When someone finds .IT,. they hide with .IT. in the same spot. The game ends when everyone find the hiding spot of .IT..

### **Please, Please Smile F**

Props: None

Purpose: Fun

Procedure: Everyone is seated in a circle with a volunteer standing in the middle. The volunteer leans down to the person of his or her choice, looks at them deep in the eye, and says "Honey, if you love me, would you please, please smile?" The recipient of this proposal simply replies "Honey, I love you, but I just can't smile." That easy - except that the recipient CAN NOT SMILE, smirk, turn up the corners of their mouth, or snicker. And the volunteer in the middle can't touch the recipient in any way- but can do anything else. The volunteer continues until someone smiles, and then trades places with the person who finally smiles.

### **Human Scissors/Paper/Rock E,F**

Props: None

Purpose: Fun, energy-building

Procedure: This is the human-size version of scissors/paper/rock. The end zones need to be clearly defined. To begin, each team huddles and decides on which play to run- either rock, paper or scissors. Then the two teams meet in the playing area. If your team's symbol wins, you chase the other team back into its end zone, trying to tag the team members before they get there. If your team's symbol loses, you must dash back to your own end zone before you're caught. Those people who get caught change to the other team. The game ends when everyone is on the same team.

### **Crows and Cranes F,E**

Props: None

Purpose: Fun, physical activity

Procedure: Define a playing area similar to a netball court. Divide the group into two teams, .crows. and . cranes,. lining them up to face each other across the centre line. When crows are called by the leader, they chase the cranes to the rear boundary area, and vice versa. When tagged, players must stand still (or join the other team)

### **Blob Tag TB,CB,E,F**

Props: None

Purpose: Fun, teamwork

Procedure: In this variation of .tag,. The people who are caught join hands with the .IT. person to form a blob. The more people are caught, the bigger the blob becomes. It's a good idea to limit the playing area so the blob doesn't have to chase people through the whole school.

### **Everybody's It( Variation Freeze Unfreeze) CB,E,F**

Props: None

Purpose: Fun

**Procedure: Everybody is IT. All participants can tag anyone. If you are tagged you must freeze in one place. Keep going until only one player remains, this student shouts "Everyone is IT" and the game restarts. With Freeze Unfreeze anyone can free a tagged person by 'ducking under' their outstretched arms. It is the participant's choice together tag people, free people, or try a combination of both.**

**Face-Off **F,IB****

**Props: None**

**Purpose: Fun**

**Procedure: Group stands in a circle so everyone can see each other. Start by doing face stretches, creating an air of goofiness and safe space for play. The T starts by making a strange, distorted, crazy face. When everybody sees it, the T turns to their left. The second person carefully copies the expression, and then both people turn to the middle. The circle claps or cheers to indicate how successful the copy, or "Face-Off," is. Then, the second person turns to their left and shares a new crazy expression with the person next to them! Go all the way around the circle.**

**Puzzle Pieces **CB,F,E****

**Materials Needed: Premade Puzzle Pieces  
(You can use anything you want and then cut them into puzzle pieces...for example, cut up advertisements for an introduction to advertising)**

**Activity Steps:**

**Give each student a puzzle piece.**

**Instruct the group that when you say "Begin" they are to move around the room and find people who match their puzzle.**

**When they believe that they have all of the pieces, they are to assemble their puzzle. The first group to assemble their puzzle...WINS.**

**VARIATION: Have the group talk about the significance of the picture or puzzle and share with the entire group before moving on.**

**Magic Lamp **TB,E,F,IB****

**Materials Needed: Flip Chart Paper  
Markers**

**Activity Steps:**

**Divide groups into 3-5 people.**

**Give the following instruction: "You and your group have just uncovered a genie's lamp. You rub it and surprise! A genie appears. The genie states that he will grant three wishes, but you all have to agree on these wishes...there is no dividing the wishes to be individual wishes.**

**Brainstorm a list of about 10 wishes your group would like to make.**

**Narrow this list down to the three that you are allowed. Provide reasons for these to be your final choices.**

**Share with the whole group.**

### **Name Tag Match Maker **IB, CB, E****

**Each group member will need a 5" x 7" card for a name tag. Then give the following directions:**

**Put your name in the centre of your card.**

**In the upper left corner, write four things that you like to do.**

**In the upper right corner, write your four favourite singers or groups.**

**In the lower left corner, write your four favourite movies.**

**In the lower right corner, write four adjectives that describe you.**

**When everyone finishes, have them mingle with the group for a few minutes. Without talking, they are to read the upper left corner of the other group members' cards.**

**When time is up, they are to find one or two people who are most like them and visit for a few minutes. When time is up, they are to mingle again reading the upper right corner of the other group members' cards. They then find the one or two people most like them and visit. Repeat with the lower left corner and lower right corner information.**

**To make sure everyone visits with several people, you could implement a rule that no two people can be in the same group more than once.**

### **Rainmaker **CB, C****

**Props: None**

**Purpose: Nonverbal communication, Closing activity**

**Procedure: Have the entire group sit in chairs, or on the floor, with their hands free from stuff and the feet firmly planted on the floor. Say something to the effect of .Sometimes we might feel like we want to achieve the impossible, and that our collective work will never finish. Right now we have a chance to make a change; we're gonna make a rainstorm.. Instruct the group to do the action you do, but only when you look at them to do it, and to keep doing that action until another comes. When its time, slowly look around the entire circle. The group should continue doing the movement until you look at them with a new one.**

- 1. Start by going .Shhhh.. like a windy day.**
- 2. Then rub your palms together, and slowly show that to the entire group. Do each motion for as long as it takes to get around the group.**
- 3. Then snap your fingers sporadically.**
- 4. Then clap your hands way out-of-rhythm.**
- 5. Then slap the tops of your legs.**
- 6. Then stamp your feet.**
- 7. And then do everything in reverse!**

**I like to end with the statement .Now you know how to make a rainstorm.**

**Let's go and make positive change in the school/world!. and send the group off.**

### **Community Web **CB, C****

**Props: A ball of string**

**Purpose: Reflection, closing activity**

**Procedure:** Students form a circle, with the T in the circle holding a ball of string. Start by tossing the ball to a S, holding onto the end of the string as you throw it. State something you appreciate about that person participating in your shared cooperative teamwork. The appreciation can be about something that recently happened or about the other person in general. The ball then travels across the circle to each player with everyone holding onto a piece of the string once the ball is tossed. Once everyone is holding onto the string and it is criss-crossed throughout the circle the T, uses scissors to cut through the string, saying .As we cut the ties to the games we've played (or activity we've finished), we leave each person a piece of string in their hand to remind them of the renewed community and new connections they have made.. (Very powerful Classbuilder, variation: Using this piece of string S's stand up whilst winding up their string around their finger they state some of their strengths and qualities time varies according to how long it takes to wrap your finger and the length of your string. This can also be done simultaneously using Timed Pair Share)

### **Pick a Metaphor CB,C**

**Props:** Small toys, pictures, postcards, knick knacks (toys from a 'pound' store and buy various items like play money, magnetic letters, figurines of different backgrounds)

**Purpose:** Reflection, closing activity

**Procedure:** One of my favourite closing exercises is to set up the middle of the room with small stuff. Have everyone pick three items they think represent their experience with the group from the pile. Everybody then shares with the group about one or all of the items they picked. All participants then get to choose one object to keep, to remind them of what they said.

### **Like Leafs on a Tree E,C**

**Props:** One sheet of flipchart paper, markers,

**Purpose:** Reflection, closing activity

**Procedure:** Draw a picture of a tree on a flip chart including roots, trunk, branches, leaves and fruit . or however you want. Give each S's a leaf cut from construction paper. Ask them to write on the leaf something they are taking with them from the lesson. Then have the group stand in a circle. Then, each person shares what their leaf says and attaches it with tape to the tree. S's can put their leaf wherever they want on the picture of the tree depending on what they take with them, but I never state this in advance. The T can go last and process the activity by noting the symbolism of what it means to be the roots, the trunk, the leaves and the fruit, or not on the tree at all.

## **ICEBREAKERS**

People have got to get to know each other in order for social change to work. Sometimes we assume that just because we share a common interest we'll get to know each other, and that's just not true! Projects, classes can be formed for Months before people really get comfortable with each other. These games are great for introductions and getting to know people in new environments, or to remind us who we're working with in established communities.

## **TEAMBUILDERS**

These activities challenge players to work together as a team, think critically, and get active in what's going on. In a society where there is so much competition and separation, these games can draw students into engaging conversations and interactions. In facilitating the reflection players can draw out the analogies with social change work.

## **TRUSTBUILDERS**

These activities teach togetherness and interactivity, emphasising success through **cooperation**. They are the pinnacle of **cooperative** games, and must be facilitated carefully and considerately, with ample thought and preparation for the reflections.

## **FUNNERS**

For more fun, more play, and more laughs, try any of these out.

## **CLOSERS**

Closure is important in social change games.. These activities are great ways to end a long day's work or play. They focus on closure and symbolism, and offer students a chance to reflect on their social behaviour.

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## **'Not At All!!'**

Brain science reveals that Silly Sports and Goofy Games are not so silly or goofy after all. Based on technological advances, the findings of brain science have been multiplying at an exponential rate: We have learned more about the brain in the last five years than in all prior history. Educators are discovering how to apply the findings of brain science to align classroom practices with how the brain best learns. It turns out Silly Sports and Goofy Games help us greatly in making a brain-friendly classroom. The brain is a busy place. The brain has about 100 billion neurons, each of which has about 2,000 synapses. Each of those synapses fires about 200 times a second. To

support all that activity the brain needs a great deal of nourishment. Although the brain is only 2% of the body's weight, it consumes about 20% of the oxygen and glucose produced by the body. It takes a great deal of fuel to keep all those neurons functioning optimally. If we cut off the supply of oxygen to the brain, brain cells begin dying within five minutes. If we reduce the supply of oxygen to the brain, brain cells lose their ability to function optimally. That is one reason Silly Sports and Goofy Games are so important: Silly Sports and Goofy Games actually provide nourishment to the brain. As students play, even if it is only for a two or three-minute game of quick tag, their heart rate and volume increases, pumping more oxygen and glucose to the brain. Their respiratory rate and volume increase as well, oxygenating the blood. With more oxygen and glucose pumped to the brain, students are more alert. Thus, Silly Sports and Goofy Games actually nourish the brain, aligning our classroom practices with how the brain best learns. The increased nourishment is not just a temporary effect. Recent research has shown long-term effects of exercise: Students who engage in regular exercise actually grow an improved circulatory system in the brain; this increased circulatory capacity actually nourishes their brains better on an ongoing basis.

A classroom is lagging. It is after lunch or during a lengthy presentation. The teacher has students get up and do a brief tag or challenge game. Students return to their seats more alert and refreshed, ready to process new information. Teachers who do frequent brain breaks not only have a more interesting, fun class — their class achieves at a higher level academically. Silly Sports and Goofy Games refresh and nourish the brains of students so they are more capable and alert.

Nourishing the brain is just one way Silly Sports and Goofy Games create a brain-friendly classroom. Our brains constantly scan the environment, seeking and attending to novel stimuli. In terms of evolution, this makes sense: Those animals that do not become more alert when faced with novel stimuli do not respond well to challenges and opportunities, and so are less likely to pass along their genes. Imagine students working for some length of time on a series of problems. They become bored. What is boredom? It is a lack of novel stimuli. Their brains begin to function at lower levels. Suddenly the teacher says, "Let's have a brain break!" calling for students to do Mirror Mirror or any of the other 200 Silly Sports or Goofy Games. Students stand up. Quickly they become intensely engaged. Why? They are attending to novel stimuli. After a few minutes, the students return to their seats, refreshed. Their increased alertness caused by the novel stimuli transfers to academic work, and achievement is increased.

Silly Sports and Goofy Games also help align the classroom environment with the state of relaxed alertness optimal for brain functioning. If students are too relaxed or drowsy, they do not learn well. If they are too aroused or anxious, they do not learn well. Good classroom management includes monitoring student energy levels. The goal of monitoring energy levels is to move the class into the optimal state of relaxed alertness. If the class is lagging, it is the job of the teacher to energize the class; if the class is too excited, it is the job of the teacher to provide a calming activity; if the class is too distracted, the good teacher provides focus. Silly Sports and Goofy Games can help in all these goals, helping students maintain a state in which they are relaxed but alert. Some Silly Sports and Goofy Games are energizers (eg., Everyone's IT!; Moon Jump; Home Run Relay, etc.), picking up the class when energy levels sag. Other Silly Sports and Goofy Games are calming (Willow-in-the-Wind; Care Lift; Move & Be). Yet other games create focus (Magic 11; Ten Count; Show Me — Don't Show Me). All of the Silly Sports and Goofy games create a safe environment — there are no winners or losers. Students experience excitement in a safe context with the absence of threat. Thus, Silly Sports help the teacher manage energy and attention, moving the class to the state of relaxed alertness optimal for learning.

There are three other ways in which Silly Sports and Goofy Games create a brain-friendly classroom: emotion, challenges, and social interaction. The brain remembers events associated with emotion. When there is emotion, the neurons in the brain actually fire at an increased level signalling the hippocampus that "this stimuli is worth remembering." This makes sense also in terms of evolution. Anything that creates fear, pleasure or any of the other emotions has survival implications; remembering emotionally-laden events gives us an advantage. Many of the Silly Sports and Goofy Games elicit emotion. When that heightened emotional state transfers to classroom activities, academic activities are better remembered. The brain is a problem-solving organ, becoming alert and attentive in the face of challenges. Thus, the challenge games help tune the brain. Finally, the brain is a social organ. Active brain imaging studies reveal the brain is more engaged in response to social stimuli than any other. And, of course, all of the Silly Sports and Goofy Games involve social interaction. This, in part, explains why students enjoy the games so much — Silly Sports and Goofy Games allow students to attend to the type of stimuli their brains most crave.

We have known for years that students love the Silly Sports and Goofy Games and that these simple activities transform the tone of the classroom and boost achievement. It is only now, with advances in brain science, that we understand why these simple activities have such a profound positive impact.

Silly and goofy? From a student's perspective, yes. From the perspective of brain science, **not at all!**

See 'Goofy Games and Silly Sports' by Spencer Kagan

