

PROCEDURE

MATERIALS

- An eight-foot length of cord or rope, tied into a loop.
- A watch or timer.

PREPARATION

Clear an empty space of approximately 10 square feet

INSTRUCTIONS

Select two volunteers to play. Arrange the area so that their actions are visible to all. Give them the rope.

Now, tell them that their only task is to hold the rope to make a specific shape you will name. They can talk as much as they like, but they must keep their eyes closed as they work. When they feel they're done, they can open their eyes. Ask observers to be quiet during the first game.

When players are ready, tell them that they are to make a simple square. Ask them to close their eyes and begin, and start your timer. When they agree to stop and open their eyes, stop your timer. How square was their square? (You might ask the class to vote on this.) How long did it take?

Once the first game has ended, ask the players to make the same shape but with their eyes open. How much quicker did they complete the task?

Now ask others to play. Try using three players and a more difficult shape.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- It's clear that the game is easier with eyes open, but exactly why is that? (The core point is that playing with open eyes not only gives each player feedback about their positions, but it gives both players *shared, simultaneous* feedback.)
- Were there specific kinds of movements or shapes that were particularly difficult?
- What kinds of real-world situations does this game remind you of? (For example, two nations might want to reduce pollution or protect an endangered species, but reaching that goal may depend on them coordinating their methods and sharing information about their power plants or conservation plans.)
- In your life, how do you coordinate with a partner on a new or difficult task?

VARIATIONS

- Try it with a much longer rope and many participants. At what point does the task become too difficult even with eyes open?
- Experiment with different ways of giving players feedback as they work on their shapes. For example, designate one student to give verbal (or even physical) feedback as players move the rope. Or ask the class to shout out feedback during the game. What kinds of feedback are helpful, and what kinds make the task harder?
- Limit players' freedom of conversation by giving one participant the role of Questioner and the other the role of Respondent, and restricting their conversation to yes/no questions.
- Ask the class to suggest new shapes for players to attempt.



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