



COMMUNICATION

By Peter Worley.

Here's a new session I've been running recently and having a great deal of success with. Especially if you include at least one of the extension activities, the children really enjoy this, so if you find yourself needing something a bit more fun towards the end of term/year, this should fit the bill. When doing the extension activities, you can ask them if they can see any links between the enquiry and the activities.

Begin by playing the Sitting Down Game (<https://www.philosophy-foundation.org/games-for-thinking>). Once you've played, draw their attention to the rule that there must be no communication of any kind. Either simply allow them to critically engage with this rule by asking them what they think about this rule (open approach) or ask the following TQ: **Is it possible to not communicate with the class?** (closed approach)

Nested Questions:

- ✓ What is communication?
- ✓ What is not communication?
- ✓ What different ways can you communicate?
- ✓ Is it possible to communicate without talking/moving/signing... etc.

If people suggest things, such as turning from someone or leaving the room, then Try Them! Follow each of these tried examples with the TQ: **So, what do you think, did F and G manage to not communicate?**

In order to understand what is and what is not an example of communication, you could ask them why you (as adjudicator) disallow certain things, such as why action X might be counted as communication, such as sitting down slowly or putting one's arms out before sitting – you could invite them to critically engage with your decisions!

Communication extension activities:

1. Guess the adverb! (From Miriam Cohen) Place a chair in the centre of the Talk Circle. Take a volunteer, take them to a corner or out of the room for a short while and provide them with an adverb (e.g. stealthily). Ask them to sit in the chair in a way that describes the adverb they've been given. The class have to then try to guess what the adverb was; take a single-word answer from each pupil. Direct hits (i.e. 'stealthily') and close synonyms (e.g. 'sneakily' or 'secretly') count. Reveal the word at the end. Then play with someone else.
2. Three Words! (A variation from Fisher's Games For Thinking and the classic boardgame Password!) For this game a player comes to the front and you give them a hidden word (e.g. Shark). They have just three clue-words to get the class to guess the word they've been given. After each clue word take three guesses as to the main word. They get three points if it is guessed after the first clue-word (e.g. "Jaws"), two if after the second (e.g. "Sea"), one if after the third (e.g. "teeth") and none if not guessed in three).
3. Dramatise situations. If someone says something like in order to not communicate you need to 'pretend they are not there', have them act out a scene in which someone is treated as they are not there. Use contrasting scenarios to help bring out nuances. E.g. one situation where a group of friends is playing but excluding by ignoring one of the children and another where a friend is trying to complete an exam while her friends are trying to distract her. One child said that in the first situation it is 'exclusion' and therefore bad, whereas in the second it is 'trying to focus' and therefore good to ignore her friends. Then ask them how the character/s might feel (anchoring to 'and what does that tell us about whether they were communicating or not?'). Ask them if there is a difference between A and B or whether communication was happening or not (if not, then what?) and so on.
4. Honest Sa'id. You can adapt the story/session from Once Upon an If: <https://www.philosophy-foundation.org/enquiries/view/the-magician-s-tricks-honest-sa-id-and-the-magician> to explore how one can communicate without various senses. Is there a point at which one would not be able to communicate at all?