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Drama-Based Instruction

Activating learning through the arts!

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Group Counting

Context for this Strategy

Number of Players:

3+

Space:

[Room for a Circle](#)

AKA:

Counting in the Dark

Age Group:

[Upper Elementary/Primary](#)

[Middle School/Secondary](#)

[High School/Secondary](#)

What is it and Why Use It?:

Group Counting invites students to count out loud from 1 to 20 (or higher) as a group without a designated order. This strategy asks students to heighten their awareness of the group, practice patience and listening, and work together to accomplish a challenging group task.

Directions:

Invite students to stand in a circle. Introduce the activity: *Our task is to count from 1 to 10 out loud, in random order, with each group member offering one number at a time. If two people say a number at the same time, the game stops and begins again with 1.* Explain that anyone can say a number whenever they wish, although they cannot say two numbers in a row. To begin, ask everyone to close their eyes or focus on the floor in the center of the circle, then say, *Go!* The teacher might set an initial goal: *Can we get to 10?* Then, push the group to count to 15 or further if possible. It can be productive to stop the game and discuss group strategy. Part of the learning is the groups' discovery about how to solve the difficult task.

Reflection:

- *On a scale of 1 – 10, with 10 being very successful and 1 being not so good, how did we do as group? Why?*

- *When did you choose to say a number? When did you choose to stay silent?*
- *What skills or strategies did you use to be successful in this activity?*
- *How might we use these same skills/strategies in other areas of our classroom?*

Possible Side-Coaching:

- *Take your time. There's no need to rush. Working together takes time.*
- *Let's all take a deep breath to regroup.*
- *Try to sense when it might be your turn—listen and be aware of the whole group.*
- *Try staring at a focal point in the center of the circle to stay focused and to listen.*

Possible Variations/Applications:

- Use the game as a closing activity for *each* class so students can end their work in a focused, collaborative mind set, and also track their improvement over time.
- **READING:** Instead of numbers, try reciting the alphabet one letter at a time.
- **MATH:** Repeat this activity multiple times and chart the group's progress each time. The number achieved can serve as data to teach averages, mean, median, mode, and range as well as probability, fractions, and percentages. Students can also count by 2's, 3's, etc.

Source Citations:

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