

# No Prop Connections and Team Building Activities for the Classroom

with Dr. Chris Cavert | AEE Asia-Pacific Conference 2024

## Workshop Details

Powerful connections and teambuilding practices, leading activities, can be done without props or special gear. In this workshop, experience icebreakers, energizers, connectors, problem-solvers, and thought-provokers – engaging purposeful activities for students of any age.

## **Objective**

The main objective of this workshop will be to show participants no-prop, easy-to-lead experiential activities they can use with their students to build connects in the classroom and open discussion about important community topics.

## **Significance**

Building connections in the classroom and engaging in meaningful community discussions is important to all educators. When there are strong connections between students, and between the students and the teacher, more learning takes place. Easy-to-use community-building experiences are valuable tools for any educator.

90-minutes

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## Stationary Greeting

**Needs & Numbers:** Open up a big space in the room or find a space outside. This one plays well with 20 to 50 people.

**Process:** Ask everyone in your group to find their own “personal space” within the playing area – they can be close to each other but not able to reach out and touch anyone. Here’s an example script to get the idea:



*Now that you all have your own space, we’re going to make some connections with others in the room – but our movement will be limited. First, let’s connect, using a fist bump, with as many people as we can without moving our feet from where they are right now – both feet are glued to the floor (or ‘planted’ in the ground). Let’s see how many people we can exchange fist bumps with. Ready? Go. [Let the fist bump action play out until all the movement/work stops.]*

*Okay. How many people were you able to connect with? Call out your number. [Provide time for this.] These people were easy to connect with, people close to you – not much effort was needed. Now, did you get everyone’s name when you connected? If not, do share names during the next round so we have a little better connection.*

*During the next connection, you can fist bump those close to you again, be sure to get their name and share yours, but you’ll get to reach a few more this time. Where your standing is your ‘home base.’ From this base you can keep one foot glued/planted and take one step into the crowd with your other foot, of course, bring the leg along with it. Be mindful of others around you before you step to avoid collisions. And try not to over-extend yourself so you don’t lose your balance. Your objective is to connect, fist fist-bump, with even more people in the group. And yes, you can step back to your home base, plant the step foot, and step out with the other foot to get even more connections. Remember to keep count of connections. Let’s go! [This round may play longer than the first. Get their attention after all movement has stopped.]*

*Okay. How many people were you able to connect with this time? Call out your number. [Provide time for this.] You still had easy connections with the people close to you – not much effort was needed. But you did need to make a bit more effort to connect with people further away. It took a little more time. It took a little more planning as well, would you agree? Now, did you get everyone’s name this time? Look around. How many do you remember. [Allow some time.]*

*What would you say is important about making connections in your life? [Take some time for answers.] What about making connections related to your career path? What is the value of connections? [Take time for answers.]*

# No Prop Connections and Team Building Activities for the Classroom

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*Now we are going to make some final connections with the next layer of people, those just out of reach. Start out as before, making contact with those around you, both feet planted. Then, step into the crowd for more. When ready, you get one 'jump' in any directions. A jump is pushing off from two feet and landing on two feet. When you get to your new spot you are allowed to pivot again. Remember, only one jump is allowed. Before we start this final round of connections, what do we want to be mindful of? [Allow some time for a good conversation about safety – taking care of yourself and the others around you.]*

It appears you are all ready for the final round. You may begin. [Wait until all the work is done.]

*Nice work everyone. How many more connections were you able to make? Shout out your number. [Take time for this.]*

**Facilitator Notes:** This one is straightforward. We like to be near the front of the group, or right in the middle of the crowd, so we can play as well – role modeling the actions. The main idea is that everyone stays in their original starting position, not walking around.

Talking Points:

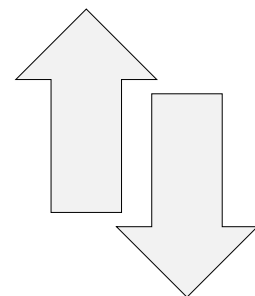
Since we tend to present this one very early (often first) we don't process all the time. However, if you did:

- How many names do you remember? Were most of the people you remembered near you? Why do you think this happened? (A question for groups coming together for the first time)?
- How about the names of those players just beyond the initial fist bumps? Were their names more allusive? Why?
- Did you ever feel uncomfortable? Where do you think that feeling comes from?
- Were you able to "connect" with everyone in the room? What prevented you from connecting with everyone?
- What is a reasonable number of connections for a group this size? How many connections are comfortable for you in a group this size?
- What effort do you usually make in different situations to make connections – small groups, large groups?
- What can be important about connections in your life or career?

## Are You More Like

**Possible Objectives:** *Decision Making, Accepting Diversity, Listening, Compromising,*

## Are You More



**Needs & Numbers:** You will need a

'line' for this one. You could tape down a line, use an activity rope, or use one of the lines on a sports court or field. Plays well with 10 to 50 people.

# No Prop Connections and Team Building Activities for the Classroom

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Procedure: Clear out the center of the room as much as possible (you will find as you read on that I like to, "clear the center of the room" a lot - gets the oxygen moving). If the straight line is the easiest for you, just place some masking tape down the center of the floor. I'll use the circle formation here in my description.

Ask your students to stand around the outside of the circle. You will ask them to choose one of the two characteristics from each statement you are going to ask. If they are more like the first characteristic, step into the circle. If they are more like the second characteristic, stay to the outside of the circle. Leave a little time between each statement to give the students a chance to see who else is standing with them. I will play this one too, just stepping in and out as I read.

That's the simple gist. I like to use this activity as my introduction to the process of active learning - getting up and moving around. I keep it simple the first time with a little processing after. Down the road I can use this activity again to bring out more personal perspectives on the statements.

Note: I have had a great deal of fun with this activity. I try to encourage my students to think more about the characteristics of the characteristics. I will often hear, "but I don't like either." You might help them a bit by describing some of the characteristics of the items. This might help them, "get out of the box" so to speak.

The list below is not in any sort of order. You can pick and choose which statements will be serve your purpose at the time.

Are you more like...

1. chocolate or strawberries?
2. a carpet or wood floor?
3. a hard cover or paperback book?
4. skim milk or 2%?
5. a chair or a couch?
6. apples or oranges?
7. pants or shorts?
8. bath or shower?
9. jeans or khakis?
10. glass or plastic?
11. bunk bed or twin bed?
12. a bus or a plane?
13. a bracelet or necklace?
14. solids or stripes?
15. sandals or shoes?
16. shade or sun?
17. cursive or printing?
18. buttered or plain popcorn?
19. potato chips or pretzels?
20. a run or a walk?

# No Prop Connections and Team Building Activities for the Classroom

with Dr. Chris Cavert | AEE Asia-Pacific Conference 2024

21. soda or water?
22. panic or relaxed?
23. gel or paste?
24. a weekday or a weekend?
25. Chic Filet or McDonalds?
26. long hair or short hair?
27. fact or fiction?
28. Air mail or E-mail?
29. peanut or plain?
30. a cat or a dog?
31. salted or unsalted?
32. the escalator or the stairs?
33. a chocolate or oatmeal cookie?
34. cheerios or corn flakes?
35. math or art?
36. country or rock?
37. the ocean or a river?
38. a pen or a pencil?
39. fish or steak?
40. desktop or lap top?
41. 7up or Sprite?
42. diet or regular?
43. pasta or rice?
44. cheese or pepperoni?
45. hamburgers or hot dogs?
46. an Amusement park or a Water park?
47. Army or Navy?
48. fruit or vegetable?
49. television or radio?
50. CD or cassette?

## Observations/Questions:

- Who can think of another pair to choose from?
- Did anyone have trouble deciding? Why?
- How many of you might have made a choice based on what one of your friends decided?
- Was there ever just one person in the center? on the outside? What was that like?
- Is hard to make choices sometimes? What makes it difficult?
- What sorts of choices might we be making in our classroom?
- Will we all make the same choices? Why not?
- What might be some negative aspects of being different?
- What are some skills we might need to practice to work through our differences in this class?
- What might be some positive aspects of being different?

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**Back-to-Back** - (no prop, attention seeking technique) This one is a pairing technique and a way to quiet the group. When someone needs a partner, they raise a hand and look for someone else doing the same thing, then they get together.

Needs & Numbers: No props needed. Be sure to have some discussion questions prepared to share (some suggestions below). Plays well with 10 to 50 people.

Process: When "Back-to-Back" is called, find someone near you to pair up with, then stand back-to-back with this person. All pairs listen for information. When "Face-to-Face" is called, pairs face each other OR find a new partner (depending on the instructions given) and stand face-to-face to complete the task given.

Some engaging WE Connect card questions:

(Find FREE WE Connect cards here: <https://weand.me>)

- What made you smile in the last two weeks?
- What is something you have always wanted to learn?
- How well would you get along with your clone?
- What is life teaching you right now?
- What is a personality trait you admire in others?
- What is a time you learned something from a failure?
- What is an interesting skill you have?
- What has been one of your favorite moments in life?
- What would your closest friend say is your best character trait?

## Paired Activities

- Rock, Paper, Scissors (RPS) Balance - Pairs face each other and place their own feet in a heel-toe stance. Have about 12-inches between players feet. Play RPS. The winner (always) places their front foot behind their back foot. The loser slides their front foot ahead to touch their partners front foot - toes-to-toes. Play RPS. Winner, front foot back. Loser slides front foot forward. Play continues until one person touches the floor with another body part (other than their feet).
- 1, 2, 3 - (Quick Reminder) Pairs. Round 1: Count back and forth from 1 to 3 - it must be a 'rhythmic' cadence and only numbers 1, 2 & 3. Play for 30 seconds. "Did anyone make a mistake? What happens when we make mistakes - what behaviors show up for us? How do we want to use mistakes?" Round 2: Number one is replaced with a hand clap. Two and three are spoken again. Play for 30 seconds. "Did anyone make a mistake this time? Why was this Round more challenging?" Round 3: One is still a hand clap, two is now both hand up and three is still spoken. Play for 30 seconds. "How is it going? How are you managing mistakes? What conversations are going on in your head?" Round 4: One is a hand clap, two is hands up and three becomes a heel raise or slight jump. "How was this round? Easier? Still difficult? What does this activity teach us?" (Brain science - Words and actions come from different parts of the brain. How does this inform our teaching?)

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## Handshakes

- **Lumberjack/jill:** Stack fists holding thumbs and saw the log. Q: Describe something you've built within the last year.
- **Salmon:** Lightly slap the forearm of your partner. Q: Describe something that's challenged you within the last month.
- **Dairy??** (Comfort Zone): Share an experience that took you out of your comfort zone within the last month.
- **Rodeo:** Thumb-grip handshake, hold tight to support. Lean back swinging back free hand and shout "Whoooo!" Q: Share an experience where you supported someone within the last week.
- **Caterpillar/Butterfly:** Traditional handshake three times with a wave-like motion through the arms saying, "Caterpillar, Caterpillar, Caterpillar," then lock thumbs, flip fingers like wing, hands go up saying, "Butterfly." Q: Describe a transformation in yourself you have experienced within the last year.
- **Down Under:** Back-to-back with partner, lean over and give partner a traditional right-handed handshake reaching through the legs. Q: Share three things that bring you up/raise your spirits when you're down.



## My Baggage Lies Over The Ocean (*The EMPTYbag*, Cavert & Hammond)

**Needs & Numbers:** If you have enough room, create one big circle with your group. If your room is limited, it's okay to have your group scattered around the space you have – they just need to be able to see you. Plays well with 10 to 25 (or more) for 10 to 15 minutes.

**Process:** This challenge is a nice warm-up for the body and the vocal cords – yes, this one's a singer. The song is sung to the tune of, "My Bonnie Lies over the Ocean" (search YouTube for a rendition of this classic folk song to get the tune.)

For our purposes, we're going to change 'Bonnie' to 'Baggage' bringing in a traveling theme. Once you know the tune, you are ready to introduce this one to your group.

We're going to 'scaffold' the learning on this one. Be the first to sing the song in front of the group – have fun with it. If others know the tune they can chime in. After the first introduction, sing it again inviting everyone to join in to the best of their ability. If needed, sing the song again and invite some hearty singing from the group. This initial scaffold is to get everyone comfortable with singing the song (or at least willing to).

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My Baggage Lies over the Ocean,  
My Baggage Lies over the Sea,  
My Baggage Lies over the Ocean,  
Oh, bring back my Baggage to me!  
Bring Back, Bring Back,  
Oh, Bring Back my Baggage to me to me.  
Bring Back, Bring Back,  
Oh, Bring Back my Baggage to me to me.

Now we're going to step up the challenge (learning). This time, when we sing the song we're to clap on every "B" sound/word – mostly "Baggage" and several "Bring Backs." Keep the song at a reasonable pace so there is a little time to think about the clapping. Consider performing this step two or three times to lock it in.

During this clapping stage, you can have a discussion with your group about learning. What does it take to learn something new? ("Practice" is a common response. "Wanting to learn" is another response to consider. "Having fun with something challenging – the brain likes to be challenged" is a deeper discussion.) Whenever it's possible, take the time needed for everyone to find success – it feels good to be confident in what you've learned before moving on. Consider this as well: How are the ones who 'get it' helping others who are struggling?

When we've locked in the singing and clapping we're going to the next challenge. For this part, we'll be singing, and squatting or standing. On the first 'B' word participants will be doing a small squat – bend in the knees. They hold this squat until the next 'B' word where they stand back up. On the next 'B' word they squat, on the next 'B' word they stand, and so on throughout the song. If no mistakes are made, everyone will be standing on the last "Baggage."

This challenge is another good time to talk about learning and to help each other reach mastery. Maybe it takes slowing down the song. Maybe it takes more practice and patience.

The final challenge is to put the clapping and the squat-stand together. On the first 'B' word everyone claps and squats. On the second 'B' word everyone claps and stands up. On the third, we clap and squat and on the fourth, we clap and stand. Repeat this to the end. As in the last challenge, if there were no mistakes everyone is standing on the last "baggage."

If the group is still having fun, give it another try a bit faster.

Talking Points: Explore the fear around doing something uncomfortable - singing. What is our philosophy around 'trying' something we're apprehensive about - when are we more likely to try and when are we less likely? Mistakes - What is our self-talk? How do others treat, or view, us when mistakes are made? What does it take to reach 'Mastery' in something? How good is Mastery? What are the factors related to 'giving up' on something? What are the factors to sticking with something that is difficult or something perceived to be "stupid?" What are the benefits of sticking with something?

Variations: If you dare, alternate Claps and Dips. Will they end up standing or dipped?

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## Six Count (Solo & Team)

Needs & Numbebrs: You'll need enough room for players to move their arms around freely. Plays well with 8 to 25 (or more) for 10 to 15 minutes.

Make sure everyone has enough room to move their arms up and down straight out from their sides. Ask everyone to start with their arms down at their sides.

### Process:

**Step 1:** Count to six. Everyone counts to 6 – “One, Two, Three, Four, Five, Six” in any language.

**Step 2:** Left Arm. Using the left arm only, count to six with some movement. On “One”, a straight left arm goes up, out to the side, and stops straight up overhead in the air. On “Two” back down to the side the same way. On “Three” the arm goes straight back up overhead. On “Four” is back down to the side. On “Five” straight up again, “Six” back down to the side. Good.

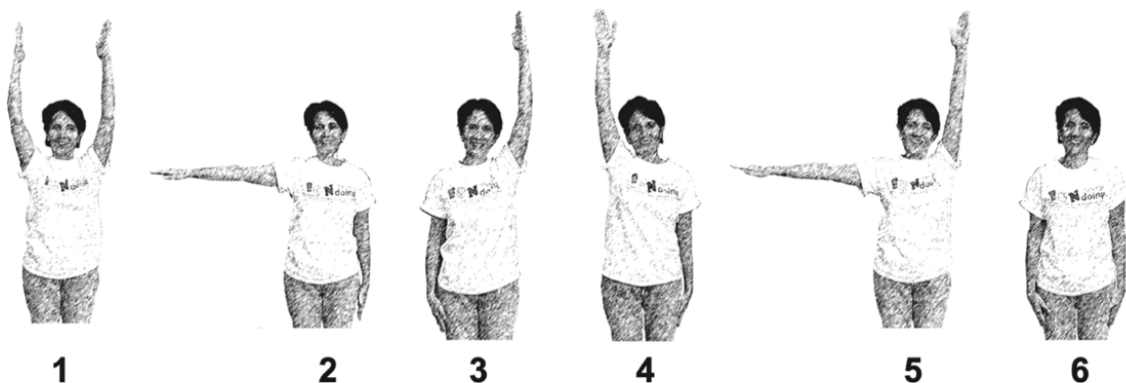
**Step 3:** Right Arm. Using the right arm only, out to the side, on “One” the right arm goes straight up overhead. On “Two” the right arm moves down (the side) but only halfway, stopping when it is parallel to the ground. On “Three” the arm goes back down to the side. At “Four” the arm goes back up again, on “Five” down parallel to the ground, and on “Six” it’s back down to the side.

You might like to practice each arm one more time before...

**Step 4:** The ultimate challenge is to put both arm movements together at the same time! (See the pictures below.) Try this a few times starting slow and building up speed. After some laughs stop the action. Let them know they can practice later, on their own if they want to master it.

**Step 5:** Put participants into groups of 3 or 4 and have them work together to ‘perform’ six count together. Think, synchronized swimming. Then, each group shows off their work to the other groups.

Talking Point: We can get better at something if we.....practice.



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## Circle Clap or Name Around

Needs & Numbers: A nice open area to form one circle. Plays well with 10 to 30.

Process: Create one big circle with your group (in a classroom full of desks, you could create a square formation with your students. This is a timed activity. One person will start by clapping once. Then the next person to the right claps once. Then the next person to the right claps once, and so on around until the last person in the group claps once. If there are any simultaneous claps, the group stops and resets for a restart.

The idea is for the group to work together, no simultaneous claps, to get their best time.

Talking Points: Problem-solving – identify and solve, Focus, Doing your part, Improvement, Success/Failure process.

## Speed Practice: Find the Open Spaces

This experience is used to teach and practice the expectations of person-moving speed when interacting together during activities. Especially during tag games.

Needs & Numbers: Create recognizable boundaries in your space. If you are going to play in a classroom setting, you'll want to create a large open space by moving desks off to the side (if this is possible). The best place to play this one is outside. Place some type of object, like sports cones, small boxes, or game spots at each corner of your boundary square shape. Don't make it too big – just enough room for everyone to be about arm's length from anyone else in the group. Plays well with 10 to 30 people.

Process: The objective of the activity is for everyone to look for and constantly move to open spaces inside the boundary area and avoid making contact with anyone else in the group. Players will be doing this at different speeds.

**Speed Level 1:** Players move at a regular walking speed – as if they were casually walking to the store. Always looking for and moving to open spaces. At this speed, players can say hello to other people as they pass by. Play for 60 seconds.

**Speed Level 2:** Players move at a fast walk, again, looking for and moving to the open spaces. It's still possible to say hello to others as they pass by one another. Play for 45 seconds. NOTE: When walking, there is always, at least, one foot on the ground at all times. Play for 45 seconds.

**Speed Level 3:** Players will be moving at a slow jog, looking for and moving to the open spaces. At this level, if you can, make the boundaries a little bigger to create more open spaced to move into. At this speed players can say "Hi" to each other as they pass by. Play for about 30 seconds.

**Speed Level 4 & Level 5:** Level 4 is running at a moderate speed; Level 5 is sprinting. For classroom spaces you won't need to practice these speeds.

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**Eye Contact Partner Tag** (found in, *The EMPTY Bag* by Hammond & Cavert) Needs & Numbers: If you are using your classroom, open a big space in the middle of the room. Plays well with 16 to 25 (or more) for 10 to 15 minutes. Time Needed: 10 to 15 minutes. (It's a good idea to do some Speed Practice (above) before this one. Ask your participants to stay at Level 1 & 2 speeds.

Process: Have (or set up) every player with a partner. The best-case scenario is where partners are about the same height (but, a major height difference is something to metaphorically talk about). A group of three will work if needed. Create a boundary area suitable for your group size (use safe corner markers like collapsible cones, spots, or coats and sweaters if you are outside) – the smaller the area the more interesting the game (the larger the area the faster the running speeds – be careful).

This one plays like the historical *Partner Tag* (Rohnke) where players use a simple hand tag to transfer the “IT” to his or her partner. In this tag game, the only player you are allowed to tag is your partner. After being tagged the new IT must first make two complete turns in place before going out to tag back his or her partner. These same rules apply to ECPT, however, the one big difference is the mode of tagging. Partner tags must be done by making eye contact. With this in mind, there are a few additional “play fair” rules. All players must keep their eyes open. Non-“IT” players must keep their open eyes (it’s okay to blink) at head level – either making eye contact with other players in the game or looking at some part of another players skull area (e.g., ear, back of the head). Finally, play the no-contact rule. Players (usually non-IT players) are not allowed to “link up” in any way with another person as to prevent another player access to making eye contact with his or her partner.

To start the game, decide which player from the pair (or group) will be “IT” first. The “ITs” stand in the center of the boundary area for a count of five (the group counting together) while the other non-IT players find strategic (?) advantage within the playing area. Traditionally, 60-second rounds work out well. After 60 seconds stop the group, ask for all the ITs to raise a hand, point to their partner and say, “Your IT” and begin another 60-second round.

After the two 60-second rounds you can (if necessary) declare the untagged partner the winner of the game.

Variations: You might add the rule that players may not maintain eye contact with anyone for more than 3 seconds – this adds a bit more “tagging” potential. We often progress into ECPT from the traditional tag version (Partner Tag) to keep the game and interest going. And if you have foam pool noodle toys in your gear closet, you can play Partner Tag using a noodle as the tagging device.

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## Switch, Change, Rotate

Needs: You'll want a nice open area for this one. If you're working inside a classroom with desks and chairs, you can have the lines weave around the furniture if the isles are wide enough. Works well with 20 or more for 20 to 25 minutes.

Process: Ask your players to get into groups of 3 or 4 and stand in a single-file line facing in the same direction. This activity involves the facilitator giving specific commands the small groups are asked to follow - to the best of their ability. First, you'll want to do some practicing with the small groups standing in place. The first command is, "Switch." The player at the front of the line peels off and goes to the back of the line - practice. Next, say "Change." The line of players is required to turn 180 degrees to face the opposite direction - practice. Next is "Rotate." This command requires the front and back players to exchange places - practice. Spend a little time practicing with each command while the groups are stationary. At this point you are going to add the command, "Move." On this command the groups start walking (doesn't need to be fast) around the room (within the established boundary area) in their single file line formation - the head of the line being the leader. The lines are allowed to weave around the area as long as each small group stays together. The last command you will need to give the groups is, "Freeze" - this obviously stops all the action. So, now the groups have all the commands they need. Here is the ultimate challenge. Start out the groups with, "Move" then begin working in the Switch, Change & Rotates as the groups are walking around. (If you have some music to play during the activity it gives the groups some beat to walk to.) Give the groups enough time between calls to get into the correct formation. Be sure to mix up the "commands" so the groups do not know in what order the commands will be given!! After a few minutes the groups should have it down pretty well. This activity brings you wonderful leadership issues and how the group members help one another.

Variations: If you think your group is ready for a trusting challenge, have them first, "Freeze" in place. Ask them to close their eyes for the next round. Assure the players they can open their eyes at any time if they need to but challenge them to work together to keep this safe. Also, teach the "Bumpers Up" position (hands and arms up in front of you with thumbs touching) to add some up-front safety.

## Toe-to-Toe, Palm-to-Palm, Back-to-Back

Needs & Numbers: You'll need a nice size open area. Plays well with 2 to 24 players (an even number of players is best; however, this can work with small groups of three if needed) for 25 to 35 minutes.

Process: This activity demands a bit of physical muscle movement and stress. We like to warm-up participants with other simple stretches like in Ripples an/or easy muscle movements like in Jump Around before we do this one. Each player will need a partner (have them introduce themselves if they don't already know each other). We will always demonstrate each physical action before the players perform it - either using a participant to help one of us or another facilitator if available.

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**Toe-2-Toe:** Facing your partner, stand toe to toe. Grab each other's wrists and SLOWLY lean back into a balanced position until both partners' elbows are extended (arms are straight). Then each pair is challenged to squat down together (not beyond comfort level) and then stand back up without losing their balance. Repeat if desired to attain a nice flow of squat to stand. Give that person a "high five", thank them for being your partner and go find another partner (size, most often, does not really matter). Have each player introduce themselves to their new partner and perform "toe-2-toe" with their new partner.

**Palm-2-Palm** is the next challenge. Partners face each other about three to four feet apart and place their palms together (do not allow them to interlock fingers). Then challenge each pair to slowly lean forward, bending at the elbows keeping their bodies straight, until their foreheads touch and then press with the hands to stand back upright. Increase the challenge by asking players to scoot their feet back a "baby step" and repeat touching foreheads and then standing back up (or making a step towards the center before standing if needed). Have them keep scooting back each time for a bigger and bigger lean – looking for the "mean lean." After each pair has reached their challenge limit have each player give their partner a "high five", thank them for being their partner and go find another partner. New partners introduce themselves to each other. Ask each pair to perform "palm-2-palm." Then demonstrate,

**Cheek-2-Cheek:** Partners stand back-to-back (yes, those cheeks) and then scoot their feet forward until the pair is leaning against each other like an "A" frame– heels at least two feet apart. The player's arms and hands are down by their sides. Pairs are allowed to press hands together but do not let them link elbows. The challenge is to squat down as far as comfortable and then stand back up together. After a successful squat and stand have pairs high five and thank each other for being partners and keeping each other safe. **WARNING:** Each of these actions has its own safety issue – mostly footing issues. Identify and remove (if possible) any hazards and warn participants of any possible dangers. Again, these actions will put strain on certain muscle groups. Encourage participants to pay attention to their abilities.

Talking Points: Support, Risk-Taking, Choosing your challenge, Communication.

## Leadership Walk

During this activity, we are going to be asking our students to close their eyes when they are the followers. Use this activity when you believe the students have gained some effective communication behaviors and seem willing to follow an assigned leader.

Needs & Numbers: You'll want an 'interesting' area for the Walks. For example, a playground space with obstacles to move around; a wooded area with trails; a classroom with desks and chairs – you could even move into the hallways when appropriate. This one plays well with five to 25 people (divided into group of four or five people per group).

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Process: Creatively form groups of four to six participants. Each group will form a single file line somewhere in the classroom (or, if you have an interesting place to lead this one outside, like a playground area with obstacles, take the class out of the room).

This one will be played in several Rounds – each person within a group will have the opportunity to lead their peers around the activity area. Ask all groups to form a single-file line. Then, one of the group members volunteers to be the leader. The leader will have their eyes open; the rest of their group will be asked to close their eyes.

Before getting started, discuss the safety issues that are apparent in this activity. With the group's help determine the safety-awareness needs. With a good safety plan in place let the participants get started.

Each Round is about 90 seconds to two minutes – the teacher keeps the time. The leader of each group will verbally instruct their group peers to move throughout the room, maneuvering around desks and aiseways. When the time teacher calls “TIMES UP” everyone can open their eyes. Then, about a minute is provided for the groups to give constructive feedback to the leader – the positives and areas of improvement. Then, groups line up again, choose a new leader, and take another journey around the activity area.

The learning objective is to explore leadership behaviors through practice and feedback. The hope is when current leaders are given feedback (advice), the ‘future’ leaders will heed such advice when it's their turn to lead.

Talking Points: What are some of the challenges of being a leader? What are the easy things about being leader? What were some of the positive behaviors you notice from leaders? What were some leadership behaviors that didn't work for you? To you, what is the most important trait a leader can possess?

## **Velcro Circle/Square** (open the room or move outside)

During this activity, we will be asking our participants to close their eyes. Be sure group members have developed a fair amount of trust with each other before leading this one.

Needs & Numbers: You'll want an open space, one large enough to form a circle (or square) with your group. If you're in a classroom, move the desks to the sides of the room if you can. Head outside for this one if the classroom is not large enough. This one plays well with at least 12 people and up to 24.

Process: Circle up your group and ask each person to say hello to the person on their right and left. It will be important to remember these people, so spend a little time connecting here.

After this initial connection, teach everyone the ‘bumpers up’ position – arms are up in front, hands are open with palms facing about shoulder height, elbows are slightly bent.

# No Prop Connections and Team Building Activities for the Classroom

with Dr. Chris Cavert | AEE Asia-Pacific Conference 2024

Everyone is creating a little flexible bumper in front of them for some frontal protection as they walk during the eyes closed portion of the challenge.

Okay. Now that the circle of players has their hands up, ask (challenge) them all to close their eyes, and keep them close, until you instruct them to open their eyes again.

**The Challenge:** The group is going to invert their circle. This means everyone is required to move across the center of the circle (moving 'around' to the left or right to get to the other side is prohibited), ending up on the other side of the circle. Ultimately everyone will be standing next to the same two people, on the left and right, as in the original circle formation.

As the facilitator, always monitor the movement. Remind the group that it's not a race, it's about solving the problem together in a manageable way. Stop the group any time you see negative behaviors. Reset the original circle and discuss how they want the next attempt to be better for everyone.

Talking Points: Trust, Challenge, Discomfort – and what was done about it, Risk, Choice, Communication, Strategies.

## Claps Challenge

Needs & Numbers: When using this one inside, create a enough space around desks and chairs, to form a circle. Plays well with 12 to 50.

Process: This one can be done in multiple small groups and/or one large. A nice way to play is start with small groups at each Level. Give each group practice to be successful at the Level before coming together as one group to achieve the Level. (One of the challenges of the small-to-large group progression is: whose group idea will be used?)



The picture included (at right) is the starting position for each of the three Levels – left palm up, right palm down. Hands are over and under partners to the right and left.

You remember how it goes:

**Level 1:** One single clap in unison – “1, 2, 3, Clap” The group must agree to an A+ before moving to the next Level.

**Level 2:** Clap, Clap – flip – Clap, Clap. Starting position. Two claps, then flip hands and two more claps. Again, the group must agree to an A+ result before moving to Level 3.

**Level 3:** Clap (with partners), each person Claps themselves, then flip to one Clap with partners again. Basically, it's Clap (partners), Clap (personal) – flip – Clap (partners).

Talking Points: Problem-solving, Persistence, 'Quality' decisions – “Good enough.” “The best you can do.” How do we decide? Practice, Support and Encouragement.

# No Prop Connections and Team Building Activities for the Classroom

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## Shakes/Flaps, Winks/Blinks, and Belly Laughs

Needs & Numbers: This one can be done in a classroom (with desks and chairs around) or an open space – no running is involved. Plays well with 12 to 50.

Process: Here's a possible script to get the ideas...

*The first thing I would like you to do is choose a number from 1 to 5 – (a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) choose it in your head, don't tell anyone. The first rule of the game is that you can't change your number until instructed to do so. With this number in mind, you are going to want to find the others in the group who chose the same number – without verbalizing your number to anyone. You are going to do this by mingling around and clapping your number with other players. Your clap, of course, will need to equal the number in your head – so if you chose 3, you clap 3 times. The second rule is that there is no talking during the game. When you find someone of your number (someone who clapped the same number of times you did – stick with them and move around together to find others - we should end up with no more than 5 separate groups when we're done. Any questions? Mingle and clap. FUND YOUR GROUP.*

Let's find out who the groups are. When I call your number, clap together, that number, with your group – ones, twos, threes, fours, fives. Great job. Okay, choose a different number from 1 to 5 – keep this number in your head and don't forget the second rules (you can review if needed). This time however, we're going to wink your number to other players – if a one eyed wink doesn't work for you, you can do a two-eyed blink. Again, we should end up with no more than five distinct groups. Any questions? Mingle and wink or blink.

*Fantastic. Give me a loud 'Woooo' after I call your number. Where are the ones, twos, threes, fours, fives? Okay, one more time. Choose a new number, one you haven't chosen before, from 1 to 5 – remember no changing after you choose. This time we're going to find our group using big old belly laughs. For example, if you chose the number 4, it will be four big laughs (it's good to give a good demo here, be the first to show the belly laughs – with gusto) – don't be shy. Any questions? Mingle and laugh it up!!*

Okay, let's identify ourselves. When I call your number, let out that many laughs together. Let's hear those laughs ones – ready.... Okay, twos – ready....threes, ready....fours, ready....okay fives let's hear it!!

Facilitator Notes: You might need to provide a little demonstration for each interaction, especially the belly laughs. Be the first person in the room to let out big old laughs – it gives permission for others to do the same.