



## Benefits of Experiential Education for Students with LD's

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## Bridge Challenge Activity

This activity challenges participants to use problem solving skills, communication, leadership, nonverbal communication,

### Materials Needed:

- Two tables
- Materials that would be suitable to build a small bridge – including but not limited to : cups, string, paper clips, paper, toothpicks, etc. This could be reduced or added to depending on the group.

### Instructions:

- 1.) Instructor sets up two tables with a gap between them of roughly 1 foot, and two sets of identical items (cups, string, paper clips, etc.)
- 2.) Instructor provides rationale for activity:

*You're going to be given a series of items, and will have ten minutes to work together to build the best bridge that you can using the materials provided to you. You will be split into two teams, and each team must build half of the bridge. Half of the bridge will be placed on each table and the two halves must meet in the space in between the two tables.*

*There's a catch to this project, though—once you pick up your materials, you can't talk for the rest of the activity. Any time spent planning beforehand will count towards your ten minute timeframe. Before we begin, does anyone have any questions?*

- 3.) Facilitator answers questions and breaks the team up into two smaller groups. After these groups are formed, the timer starts.

### Processing Questions:

- 1.) Walk me through your planning process. How did you decide the approach you were going to take?
- 2.) What were the benefits and drawbacks of taking time to plan things out before building?
- 3.) Did your plans change midway through the building process? In retrospect, was planning still worthwhile?
- 4.) How did the experience of building without talking impact the final product?

## **Toothpaste Activity**

This activity challenges student's communication, problem solving, conflict resolution, and frustrationtolerance.

### **Materials Needed:**

- One tube of toothpaste per group
- One paper plate per group
- Paper clips, rubber bands, toothpicks, any other random object

### **Instructions:**

- 1.) Staff hand out an unopened tube of toothpaste and various other unrelated items.
- 2.) Students are instructed to fully empty the toothpaste out on to a plate. Once this has been done, they are instructed to work together as a team, using only the items provided to them, to get all of the toothpaste back into the tube.
- 3.) After the group works on this for a set length of time (moderator choice of time), they debrief.

The task is impossible to do—students may be able to get a lot of toothpaste back into the tube, but there will always be at least a little bit remaining on the plate or on the tools that they're using.

### **Processing Questions:**

- 1.) What was your experience like during this activity?
- 2.) Did you feel challenged? Frustrated?
  - a. Did this change over time as the activity progressed?
- 3.) How did your group handle differences in opinion?
  - a. Did all members have an equal voice? Why or why not?
- 4.) What could you do to make your team work together more effectively?

## Life with the Wright Family

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

- 1.) The Wright Family Story
- 2.) One playing card, penny, pen, paper clip, or some other small item for each person in the

### groupACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1.) Have your entire group stand in a circle, shoulder to shoulder.
- 2.) Give each person in the circle a playing card, penny, or some other small item that can be passed easily from hand to hand.
- 3.) Tell the group that you are going to read them a story and every time they hear any word that sounds like right, they are to pass the object in their hand to the person on their right, and everytime they hear the word left, they should pass the object to the left.
- 4.) Start reading the story (see next page) slowly so that they have a chance to catch on to what you want them to do. After a few passes stop the story and ask them how they are doing. Check to see that everyone has an object in his hand. If your group is typical, some will have two or three objects and others will not have any. Have them redistribute the objects so that everyone has one again.
- 5.) Now continue to read the story, getting faster as you go. Stop the story a couple of more times to check on how they are doing.
- 6.) After reading the story, ask the following questions:
  - a. How much of the story can you remember?
  - b. What does this activity tell us about communication?
  - c. What does this activity tell us about teamwork?
  - d. What does this activity tell us about listening skills?

After the group has discussed the purpose of the activity, tell them that this activity required teamwork, much like the School Health Index does. Tell them that during this activity, the idea was to not get too distracted by the rights and lefts and stay focused on what was happening in the story. Similarly, in our everyday lives, we often have tasks that pull us in many directions, but we should always remember what is important, the health of young people.

## STORY:

### **"Life with the Wright Family"**

One day the Wright family decided to take a vacation. The first thing they had to decide was who would be left at home, since there was not enough room in the Wright family car for all of them.

Mr. Wright decided that Aunt Linda Wright would be the one left at home. Of course, this made Aunt Linda Wright so mad that she left the house immediately yelling "It will be a right cold day before I return". The Wright family now bundled up the children, Tommy Wright, Susan Wright, Timmy Wright and Shelly Wright and got in the car and left.

Unfortunately, as they turned out of the driveway someone had left a trash can in the street, so they had to turn right around and stop the car. They told Tommy Wright to get out of the car and move the trash can so they could get going. Tommy took so long that they almost left him in the street.

Once the Wright family got on the road, Mother Wright wondered if she had left the stove on. Father Wright told her not to worry he had checked the stove and she had not left it on. As they turned right at the corner, everyone started to think about other things that they might have left undone. No need to worry now, they were off on a right fine vacation.

When they arrived at the gas station, Father Wright put gas in the car and then discovered that he had left his wallet at home. So Timmy Wright ran home to get the money that was left behind. After Timmy had left, Susan Wright started to feel sick. She left the car saying that she had to throw up. This of course got Mother Wright's attention and she left the car in a hurry. Shelly Wright wanted to watch Susan get sick, so she left the car too. Father Wright was left with Tommy Wright who was playing a game in the backseat.

With all of this going on Father Wright decided that this was not the right time to take a vacation, so he gathered up all of the family and left the gas station as quickly as he could.

When he arrived home, he turned left into the driveway and said "I wish the Wright family had never left the house today! Right?"

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/shi/pdf/training-manual/wrightfamily.pdf>

## Experience Reflection Questions

A sample of reflection questions for students who might process via journaling. Modifying questions and tailoring them to a specific individual and experience is encouraged. This is just a small sample size.

This exercise could be used as “homework”, in person meetings, or daily touch points for students to continually reflection between meetings with mentors.

1. How was the experience for you? How did you feel before/during/after?
2. Discuss your plan to modify the experience next time. Would you change anything about it? What would you keep the same? How will you approach it next time? How will you do it? What are the steps to your plan?
3. What will you do if you are feeling upset or down that might prevent you from following through on your plans for the next experience?
4. What are concrete ways staff can support you? What do you need to be your definition of success?
5. What are you looking forward to the next time? What do you anticipate might be challenging?

## Art Based Reflection

Encourage the young person to express their reflections on the experience via an art project. This is very open ended. The prompts below were created to encourage reflection before making art into a reflective piece. They may help organize and express ideas in the initial planning stages, and can be used to inspire creation.

- What are your inspirations for creating art?
  - How do those inspirations reflect your experience in the program?
  - How could the experience reflect in your art piece?
- What do you intend for audiences to see, experience, and think about when viewing your work?
  - How does it explain your experience?
- Did you encounter any difficulties during your experience? How can your work describe that?
- Is there anything about your experience that you now think you should have done differently?
  - If so, please explain what and why and how it could be reflected in your art piece.
- Did you experience personal growth as a result of your experience?
  - How can that be part of your reflective piece?