

“Whacky Adapty” Activity Guide

OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

This is a great name game/icebreaker, I always use it during intro field study. It helps you vibe check a class relatively quickly, while sprinkling in some scientific vocab right off the bat.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Prepare in Advance (or nature objects you'll need to collect and use as part of the activity)

1. Pool noodle
2. Flimsy nature thing (leaf, part of a branch)

SAFETY NOTES/CONSIDERATIONS

- Need a relatively large area with no trip hazards

ACTIVITY | 20 min

Step-by-step Directions

Setting up the game

1. The class will need to be in a large circle with one student in the middle.
2. People on the outside of the circle: if your name is said, say your name and then the name of someone else in the circle.
3. Person in the middle: try to tag the person whose name is said before they say another persons name.

Playing the game

1. Play one round in slow motion to get the hang of it and then play one or two rounds as is.
2. After a couple rounds, have the circle think pair share (TPS) to talk about possible strategies to improve.
 - a. Typical strategies they'll come up with: have a name in mind, send it all the way across the circle
3. As the group is brainstorming strategies, pull the person in the middle aside and give them a pool noodle. This is a strategy that will help them improve.
4. Play one or two rounds with these strategies in mind. Now add in the extra challenge of when you pass the name on, kneel down. This makes it so people aren't sending it to the same people every time. If someone gets tagged, everyone stands back up and it resets.
5. After a few rounds with the pool noodle, have the circle do another TPS of improvements. Pull the person in the middle aside and give them the flimsy leaf. Play a round with the leaf and challenge the class to lock in and get everyone kneeling before someone gets tagged.

Debrief

1. At the end of the game, discuss the different strategies used.
2. Define adaptations: inheritable behaviors and structures that help a group of organisms survive in their habitat.

3. Person in the middle was demonstrating structural adaptations. Structural adaptations are physical elements that change overtime in organisms to help them survive.
 - a. Ask the class to brainstorm structural adaptations in both plants (thorns, toxins) and animals (camouflage, teeth).
4. Flimsy plant part was not a beneficial adaptation for this game but it could be useful in other situations.
 - a. Brainstorm specific structural adaptations that are helpful for some but wouldn't be helpful for others.
5. People in the circle were demonstrating behavioral adaptations. Behavioral adaptations are ways organisms change their behavior to survive.
 - a. Ask the class to brainstorm behavioral adaptations in plants (growing toward the sun, only putting fruit higher in the tree) and animals (migration, hibernation)

PROGRESSION

- Challenge them to note different adaptations they notice around site throughout the week. Maybe could be used in a project?

ACCOMMODATIONS & ALTERNATE PARTICIPATION

- **Deaf/Hard of Hearing or nonverbal adaptation:** Instead of saying names, try using motions to represent animals or parts of an ecosystem. This would work better with smaller groups- even just splitting the class in two. You can give the students 30 seconds to think of their own unique motion, or you can assign them to make it quicker. Ex: Moose does moose antlers, chicken does chicken wing flaps, alligator claps hands together with straightened arms to do a big "chomp," skunk does a "stinky" motion with hand, squirrel holds hands up like tiny paws, frog does a little jump, etc. Have everyone do the motion as you're assigning them, and then go around the circle to repeat them a few times. This version is harder for the person in the middle since there's no auditory cue to turn around, they just have to watch.