

# Warm-Up: Clapping Game

A quickfire activity promoting focus, speed of reaction and memory skills

**Time:**  
10 - 15 minutes

## Resources / Preparation:

- Push all tables and chairs to the side of the room, making as large a space as possible.

## Introduction:

- Explain to the students that they are going to play a game that promotes focus. Ask them to stand in as large a circle as possible. Tell them (modeling the actions) that you will clap your hands as you move them from right to left - "passing" the action to the person on your left. S/he does exactly the same - and the action is passed around the circle. Tell the students that the faster it gets round the circle the better.

## Application:

- Begin the exercise, praising those arcs of the circle where the action is being passed the fastest. Allow the action to pass right round the circle a few times - then the next time it comes to you. "catch" it and stop the game. Repeat the activity, but nominating three people who can (but don't have to) reverse direction if the action comes to them.
- Explain that the final phase of the activity will be competitive - and will result in three winners. Tell the students that you will begin by "throwing" the action to anybody in the circle, naming them as you do so. That person will then immediately throw it to someone else (again naming them) - and so on and so forth. Explain that there are three rules - and that any player breaking them will be eliminated from the competition.
- Rule 1: the action must be thrown in the right direction. If someone throws it in one direction but names a person from elsewhere in the circle, s/he is eliminated.
- Rule 2: the action cannot "bounce back". If someone sends it back to the person who has just sent it to them, s/he is eliminated.

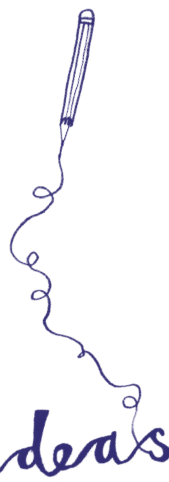
- Rule 3: the pace must be sustained. Anyone who hesitates or stumbles is eliminated.
- Check for understanding - then ask all participants, in turn, to say their names out loud. Ensure that students having the same or very similar names occupy different parts of the circle. Have a few "practice" goes at the game - then play it for real. Eliminated players sit down - and the game continues until only three participants are left. Ask the students what skills they had to use during the activity.

## Extension:

- Call for a volunteer who is willing to have their memory skills tested - and ask her / him to leave the room. Ask three participants to swap places in the circle. Call the volunteer back - and challenge him / her to identify which students have moved. Repeat the process several times - on each occasion getting one more student to change places.

## Application to other Curriculum Areas:

- In a rigorous test of memory skills, the activity can be adapted to a number of areas - ones where there are at least as many key words as there are participants. In these versions, students are identified by these key words rather than by their names - so, for example...
- MFL: the names of everyday objects in Spanish / French / German etc;
- Maths; multiples of a given number;
- PE: the names of well known sportspeople.



Get in touch and let us know about your experiences of using the Clapping Game with your pupils at:  
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