Center for Leadership & Educational Equity

Warp Speed

Developed in the field by educators.

Warp Speed is an activity that uses a soft ball and a circle of 10-20 people.

TASK

The task for the group is to create a pattern of throwing and receiving the ball until each person has caught and thrown the ball once. Once a pattern is established the group seeks to improve their effectiveness and cut down the time it takes to pass the ball from the first to the last person.

1. Ask everyone to get into a circle.
2. Ask each person to toss and catch the ball one time until each person in the group has caught and thrown the ball.
3. Explain that a toss has a low, high and low point and is different than a pass off or hand off.
4. If the ball drops, it should be picked up and the pattern continued.
5. You should be the first person to throw the ball and the last person to receive it.
6. Ask the participants to call out the person's name before they throw the ball.
7. Begin creating the pattern by calling out one person's name and throwing the ball.
8. Double check to make sure that everyone has participated and that each person has thrown and received the ball.
9. Ask the group to repeat the same pattern and to toss the ball again and see how fast they can complete the pattern. Say 1,2,3, go. and time them.
10. Report the elapsed time to the group, and ask them if they think that they can do better.
11. Repeat activity and time again. Report results and ask team to set a goal.
12. Conduct the activity a third time and report the results.
13. After reporting the results, explain that there is a reason for the name of WARP SPEED, it comes from Star Trek, and refers to speed that is much faster than the speed of light. Explain that their real challenge as a group is to get to warp speed. This speed for them is HALF of the time it took for their third timed effort.
14. They may try a few times without success. You may want to ask them what their understanding is of the rules. The only rules that they need to follow are: A. continue to throw and receive from the same person. B. toss the ball, with a low, high and low point. (If asked by the group, anything else is OK. i.e., changing the shape of circle, pattern of people, not calling names, etc.)
15. Keep giving them encouraging words, without information, if necessary; ask the groups questions to help them discover how to be successful

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PROCESSING OF EXPERIENCE

What did it take for your group to be successful/improve? What did cooperation look like in this activity? How did you help each other to be successful as a group? How were new ideas received by the group? How did setting a goal by the group effect your work as a team? What effect did the setting of an external goal have? How did your perceptions related to the possible success or failure of the group effect your performance individually, collectively?

Will any of the goals you've set for your work appear to be light years beyond the reach — for some of your staff? Given this experience, what might you do to be successful at WARP SPEED goals next year?

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