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This engaging group activity helps develop communication skills, perspective taking, and problem solving skills.

This activity is based on the intriguing, wordless picture books “Zoom” and “Re-Zoom” by Istvan Banyai, which consist of 30 sequential “pictures within pictures.” The Zoom narrative moves from a rooster to a ship to a city street to a desert island and outer space. Zoom has been published in 18 countries. The Re-Zoom narrative moves from an Egyptian hieroglyphic to a film set to an elephant ride to a billboard to a train.

- Hand out one picture per person (make sure a continuous sequence is used).
- Explain that participants may only look at their own pictures and must keep their pictures hidden from others.
- Encourage participants to study their picture, since it contains important information to help solve a problem.
- The challenge is for the group to sequence the pictures in the correct order without looking at one another’s pictures.
- Participants will generally mill around talking to others to see whether their pictures have anything in common. Sometimes leadership efforts will emerge to try to understand the overall story.
- When the group believes they have all the pictures in order (usually after 15 minutes), the pictures can be turned over for everyone to see.

Facilitator’s Notes

- Works with any age group, including corporate groups.
- Can be done indoors or outdoors.
- Once the challenge is finished, allow everyone to see the pictures and encourage participants to sort out any mistakes in the order (can be done on a table or the floor), then let everyone walk around and view the pictures in sequence so they understand the full story.

Variations

- Use as a novel icebreaker by handing each participant a picture on arrival. When everyone has arrived, explain that each person is holding part of a story and that the group task is to find out what the story is by putting their pictures in sequence.
- Use a time limit to increase difficulty and enhance focus on teamwork.
- Team performance can be measured (e.g., for a competition) by counting how many pictures are out of sequence.
- If there are a few more people than cards, then pair people up.
- For larger groups, if there are enough people then have 2 or more groups running the activity at the same time or use a sequence of cards to suit the group size.
- For smaller groups, try disallowing talking. This increases the difficulty and creates the need for expressive sign language. In general, allow large groups to talk because there is enough complexity sorting out all the pictures.
- Another way to increase complexity with small groups is to give each

Equipment

Zoom and/or Re-Zoom books by Istvan Banyai. (Separated into one page sheets; could be laminated or placed in clear plastic sleeves)

Summary

A group tries to create a unified story from a set of sequential pictures. The pictures are randomly ordered and handed out. Each person has a picture but cannot show it to others. Requires patience, communication, and perspective taking in order to recreate the story’s sequence.

Group Size

20 to 30 ideal, but can be done with fewer (see variations)

Time

Total time 20-30 minutes

- 5 mins set up and brief the group
- 15 mins active problem solving
- 5-10 mins debrief

Answer Sheets

- Zoom
- Re-Zoom

Acknowledgements

Thanks to PJ Giampietro, Michelle Cummings, Dev Pathik, Andy Martinson, Eric Nei and Christie Peterson for their descriptions and information about this activity on the AEE and ROPES discussion lists.

Related Link

Optical Illusions

<http://wilderdom.com/games/descriptions/Zoom.html>

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person more than one picture.

- To reduce complexity for young groups (e.g., pre-school), allow a small group to look through all pictures and organize the story from beginning to end.

Processing Ideas

- There is usually much potential for debriefing and discussion.
- Why was it hard to get the story together?
(everyone had a piece, but no one had the big picture)
- What type of communication was used in attempting to solve the problem?
- What communication methods might have worked better? (e.g., Imagine if, at the outset, the group had taken the time to let each person describe his/her picture to the rest of the group. What would have happened then? Would the solution have been found faster? What prevented such strategies from being considered?)
- Did you try to “second position” (i.e., see one’s communications from the perspective of others)?
- What kind of leadership was used to tackle the problem?
- Who were the leaders? Why?
- What style of leadership might have worked best?
- If you were to tackle a similar activity again, what do you think this group could do differently?
- What real life activities are similar to this activity?

References

- Banyai, I. (1995). *Zoom* New York: Viking / Penguin.
Banyai, I. (1998). *Re-Zoom* New York: Viking / Penguin.

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Answer Sheet: Zoom

1. Close up of large red rooster comb
2. Rooster head and neck
3. Rooster with children in foreground
4. Rooster in distance, children in foreground in a room with an open door
5. View of farmhouse and children in a room with open door, animals in foreground in yard
6. Aerial view of farm buildings, trees, animals
7. Aerial view of model farm, with hands and side of box
8. Girl playing with a model farm, half a sign in top left corner
9. Girl playing with a model farm (with fingers in top right corner), whole sign in top left corner reads TOYS
10. Young person sitting (partial head shown only), wearing khaki t-shirt and green shorts holding a magazine in left hand with a picture of a girl playing with a model farm
11. Young person with blonde hair in a deckchair holding a magazine, yellow railings in background
12. Deck with yellow railings, person in a deckchair holding magazine, boy in shorts and flippers and snorkel standing by a swimming pool with 3 people in it
13. Side of large white boat showing deck with one swimming pool, people on deck above, yellow funnel
14. Section of a white ocean cruise liner with people on 3 different decks, 2 yellow funnels, large red funnels on right hand side, partial black sign with letters 'ng' on top left side
15. Picture of ocean cruise liner with bus windows at top, taxi and one other car in foreground
16. Busy city street with bus showing California Cruise Line advertisement
17. Busy city street framed by television, one toe of a boot in left foreground
18. Cowboy watching TV showing busy city street
19. Cowboy watching TV in the desert
20. Cowboy watching TV in the desert on an Arizona stamp
21. Hand holding a letter with a stamp on it, island in background
22. Pacific islander receiving mail
23. Pacific islanders waving to the mailman who is getting in/out of a small dingy
24. Pacific island with pilot's head on left,
25. Cockpit of light aeroplane, with island in background.
26. Yellow and red aeroplane, with island below
27. Blue ocean, with island and a yellow and red aeroplane, with some clouds
28. Part of Earth with clouds and very small yellow aeroplane, black background
29. Blue/white part of planet Earth
30. Small planet Earth on black background
31. Small white dot on black background

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Answer Sheet: Re-Zoom

1. Close-up of red figure with bow and arrow
2. Red figure with bow and arrow
3. Wrist watch with red figure on hairy wrist
4. Arm of person with wrist watch, white paper, hieroglyphics in background
5. Person wearing a watch and a Felix the cat T-shirt taking an imprint from hieroglyphics
6. Aerial view of person and wall of hieroglyphics, ladder in foreground right
7. Looking down a long corridor, view of top of hieroglyphics wall with sky in background
8. Small rectangle with blue and beige inlay, triangular peak with blue background
9. Top of an obelisk (column) with hieroglyphic inscriptions below a triangular peak
10. Obelisk (column) with city scene and Good Year Blimp
11. Man with a monocle looking at a poster of Napoleon on a pillar, lady in foreground
12. Film set with a pillar, a car on the left, and detail of Eiffel Tower in background
13. Film set with palm trees, white camera in foreground right
14. Film set with lots of palm trees, half of face of a blue man in foreground right
15. 3 people sitting on brown object, palm tree tops in background
16. 3 people sitting on brown elephant
17. Picture of 3 people sitting on brown elephant on an orange chest, assorted melons in foreground
18. Orange chest and melons on a long narrow boat, paddler at front with a pole, small tall ship in background right
19. Small boy beside a pond pushing a model paddle steamer, long narrow boat in foreground, 2 other tall ships in pond
20. Man sitting on a stool painting a picture of a pond, castle and horse riders
21. Close up aerial view of artist's studio, girl looking at paintings
22. Aerial view of two storey building with person standing on roof top and artist's studio visible
23. Scenery- includes blue bird in top right, two storey building with red car in centre, red Japanese style bridge in centre foreground between 2 hills
24. Japanese woman wearing yellow walkman holding fan with picture of scenery on it
25. Cars in foreground, billboard with Japanese woman and 1 (800) RE-ZOOM
26. One page of a book with picture of cars and people, hand holding book foreground left
27. Two pages of a book with picture of cars and people watching a rocket launch, 2 hands holding book, feet and legs of other people in background
28. People sitting on a train
29. People sitting inside a train, framed by outside of carriage window
30. Back of train, black background

Activity taken from, <http://wilderdom.com/games/descriptions/Zoom.html>

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