

MASTER DESIGNER

Materials

This activity requires a set of geometric shapes. Each player needs a complete set, but one person in each group takes the role of observer and does not require a set. A total of five persons per group is recommended, but smaller groups are acceptable. The shapes should be made out of some sturdy materials such as oaktag. The size of these shapes is given in below. In addition, you will need some cardboard or other dividers that can be stood on a table. The idea is that each player can see the other members of the group over the divider but *cannot* see what the others are doing with their pieces.

Rules and discussion

One person plays the role of the master designer. This person has to instruct the other group members as to how to replicate a design he or she has created with the pieces (all or part of them), but the master designer cannot do this task for them. Group members cannot see what the others are doing, nor can they see the design of the master. However, group members may ask questions of the master designer. This illustrates a important new behavior:

HELPING STUDENTS DO THINGS FOR THEMSELVES

The group is dependent on the master designer for explaining how it should be done. This is the second new behavior:

EXPLAIN BY TELLING HOW

In addition to verbal directions, students may use sign language to demonstrate to each other. This will help bridge any language differences you may have in your class.

When any member of the group feels that he or she has figured out the master design, the designer is asked to check the solution. If the master designer says it is correct, then that player is to join the master designer in helping others in the group by explaining how. This rule illustrates another important new behavior:

EVERYBODY HELPS

Make up a bright poster with these three behaviors and display it prominently in the classroom. After everyone in the group has completed the original design, another student can take the role of the master designer. If you do not have time for everyone to take a turn, pick a variety of students to play this role — not just the natural leaders.

One student plays the role of observer for each round. The observer watches the group and checks off every time he or she sees two of the three new behaviors occur. These are:

EXPLAIN BY TELLING HOW

EVERYBODY HELPS

Also make up a simple scoring sheet so the observer can check off new behaviors every time he or she sees them.

Since this is the first time students have ever been asked to observe, you will need to discuss how a person would know that a student is "telling how" and "helping others." It is not so important that the observer correctly record every time the behavior happens. The fact that someone is watching for and checking off behaviors helps to objectify behavior and will assist the whole group in recognizing such behaviors when they occur.

After the exercise ask each observer to report how many times he or she saw each new behavior. The observer may be able to give some good examples of what was seen. This provides an opportunity for the teacher to reinforce the new behaviors. Follow this with a discussion similar to the one described in detail for Broken Circles. Discuss how these behaviors will be useful for the curriculum. Explain that everyone will have to do his or her own report, so it will be important that everyone comes to understand and do things for themselves.



