

THE LINE ACTIVITY

Adapted from various sources by Darla K. Deardorff, 2008.

Purpose:

To explore concepts of perspective, teamwork, competition, and persuasion.

Target Audience:

This activity is for groups of any size - and could be used with children as well as college students and adults.

Time:

Minimum time - Set up: 1 minute. Activity: 1-2 minutes. Debrief: 2-4 minutes.

Materials Needed:

None.

Procedure:

Ask participants to pair up and face each other. Tell them to imagine that there is a line on the floor between them. Give them the following instructions: "You need to do whatever you can to get the other person to come to your side of the line - Go!"

Variation: Instead of doing this in pairs, you could divide the group in half and line them up in a straight line facing each other. The goal would be to see which team could be the first to get the other team to come to their side.

Debrief:

Ask participants what happened - usually participants start off trying to persuade the other person verbally, and eventually may resort to bribes or physically pulling the other person across the line. Discuss what you and others observed and a possible solution in which both persons could be the "winner." (The ultimate solution is to simply switch sides and both "win.") Discuss the importance of moving beyond seeing situations as either/or, of collaboration, of moving beyond one's own perspective. You can note how some cultures condition their members to be more motivated by cooperation than by competition.