

What Did You Say: Level One Training

Grade Level: Elementary/Middle/High School and teachers

Purpose: To demonstrate how difficult communicating can be when a disability is present. Understanding the frustration that occurs when communicating is difficult. This activity can also promote the idea of thinking outside the box and providing modifications that can help the communicator feel and be more successful.

Participants: Level one peers
Level Two Peers
Adult/Teacher Trainers
Paraprofessionals/Aides

Materials Needed:

1. Bag of marshmallows
2. Paper and pencil
3. Set of directions to complete (see Below)

Hello, My name is _____ (state your name)
Please write my name at the top of your paper.
Next write your name on the paper below my name. Write your name in all capital letters.
Place your date of birth at the bottom of the paper on the right hand side.
Fold the paper in half.
Fold the paper in half again.
Open the paper. You should see four even sections.
Turn your paper to the side that does not have any writing.
Place a different number in each folded section.
Fold the paper again and bring it to the front of the room

Estimated Time: 15 minutes

Procedures:

1. Place students in groups of four to six.
2. Have one student place a marshmallow or two in their mouth.
3. Have the student read the directions to the group and ask them to follow the directions.
4. Explain that the group will receive a prize if they can follow the directions.
5. **Variation of this activity:** Give one group a set of picture icons of the directions and allow the reader with the marshmallows in his/her mouth to show them the icons of procedures. This group is sure to finish first or be a

- bit more successful. This will lead to a great discussion about modifications or adjustments that can promote success.
6. Once the activity is complete begin discussion

Discussion Questions:

For the student with the Marsh Mellows in their mouth attempting to explain the directions.

1. How did it feel as you attempted to explain the directions to the group?
2. What was the reaction of the group?
3. At any time where you frustrated that you could not communicate to the group properly.
4. Where you embarrassed?
5. Did you try other means to help the group understand what you were saying?
6. Do you think this might be how some students feel who have a difficult time communicating?

For the Group working to follow the directions:

1. How did you react when you listened to the directions?
2. Was it difficult?
3. If your group was given the icons...Did it help to have the icons? Why?
4. At any point did you become frustrated?
5. Did you attempt to speak for the person?
6. Did you guess what was being said?
7. Did you become impatient?
8. Why do you think this activity is important?
9. What did you learn?
10. What could you do differently if you are faced with this situation?
11. What would make the person explaining the directions feel more comfortable?

Extensions:

1. Instead of a set of directions, the individual could read a short story, poem or the lyrics to a song and the others could try to guess what is being read.
2. Each member of the group could try placing the marsh mellows in their mouth to see how it feels to try to read with a mouthful in order to experience the activity themselves.
3. Icons could be given after each group tries the activity without.
4. One group could try without any support, while others could have icons, a white board to write what is needed, gestures could be used etc.