

Exercise 5.3. – The jigsaw puzzle

Educational objectives	<p>The game simulates an experience of unfair treatment.</p> <p>The students become aware of their reactions to unfair treatment, which are based on ethical principles of justice. Justice is a fundamental category of human rights.</p> <p>The students realise the importance of solidarity and co-operation in overcoming injustice.</p>
Resources	<p>Envelopes with simple jigsaw puzzles, or pictures which have been cut up into a few pieces.</p>

Procedure

1. Preparation: there should be a puzzle for every group of three or four students in the class. Teachers can use simple ready-made jigsaw puzzles or prepare such puzzles by cutting pictures (e.g. postcards or advertisements) into a few pieces. Each puzzle should be put into an envelope. Ideally, a duplicate of the picture should be stuck onto the envelope. The teacher takes a part out of some puzzles and exchanges some parts among other puzzles. A few puzzles should be complete.
2. The students form groups of approximately four members. The teacher assigns a specific task to each team member:
 - a student in charge of time and resources
 - an arbitrator who prevents conflict and ensures that instructions are properly carried out
 - a student who has the duplicate of the finished puzzle
 - a student who carries out the task.

The teacher hands out an envelope to each group, giving them the task to solve the puzzle within a (tight) time limit. The students will quickly discover if their puzzle works out or not and whether they can obtain support from other groups.
3. The game produces clear winners and losers. Depending on the age group and the students' reaction, questions such as the following may serve to articulate and evaluate the experience of positive or negative discrimination:
 - How did you feel when you realised that the groups had different material?
 - How would you have felt if you had been in a different group?
 - How did you feel as part of the group which had too little/too much material?
 - What kinds of behaviour helped, or hindered, a group's success?

Extension

The students are encouraged to discuss real situations in which people do not have equal access to important resources (e.g. disposable time, jobs, money, power).