



Pass the Cool Clap

THIS EXERCISE KNITS A GROUP together, induces focus and energizes the group. Students will recognize their own progress as a group as, over time, they become more proficient at sending a rhythmic, speedy clap around the circle.

- 1 STEP ONE:** Arrange your students in one large circle, about arm's width apart, facing inward. Include yourself in the circle, as well.
- 2 STEP TWO:** Turn to the student on your left, make eye contact and pass a clap to that student.
- 3 STEP THREE:** The student who received the clap now turns to the student on his left and passes the clap in the same way: Make eye contact, and then clap! The clap moves around the circle, from one person to the next. All eyes must remain on the clap. If someone drops the clap, he is responsible for restarting it. The clap should move swiftly around the circle.

GAME VARIATION #1

When students become proficient, they can reverse the clap. Whoever receives the clap sends it right back to the person who passed it to him while maintaining eye contact. The person who was the giver becomes the receiver and then sends the clap in the opposite direction! This requires careful attention and practice!

TEACHER TIP

It will take some time for the group to master both variations—perhaps an entire semester—but they will have a great sense of accomplishment when they do!

GAME VARIATION #2

When the students have mastered the activity, they can begin creating patterns to pass around the circle. The patterns can be simple, like catch the clap high (above the head), and send the clap low (down by the knees). The patterns can also be more advanced, like stomp (right foot) – clap – stomp twice (left foot). The teacher chooses one student to start the pattern. The pattern passes from student to student (similar to the game “Telephone”) until the teacher says, “Switch,” and then a new pattern is created by whichever student is next in the circle. Because eye contact is often difficult in this version of the game, the students must rely on their memory and group cohesion to effectively pass the pattern around the circle.

Adapted from Viola Spolin's *Theatre Games for the Classroom: A Teacher's Handbook*