

12 Ways to Promote Teamwork, Creativity & Problem-Solving During the Summer

- 1. Organize mini skills workshops.** Teach students how to apply stage make-up; build portable theater sets; choose adhesives; use a sewing machine; use power tools safely; wire an electrical circuit between a battery, switch and a light bulb (basic electricity); make masks; design puppets; apply different kinds of paint; origami, and many other techniques. Resources could include:
 - the juvenile how-to section of your local library
 - adult “experts” which could include parents, teachers and other professionals
 - summer workshops for children offered by your local home improvement center, community art centers, city recreation departments, and local schools
 - Go to Amazon.com and search for “carpentry for children”
 - *No Fuss Backdrops*, by Destination ImagiNation, 2009, available at www.shopdi.org
 - *Carpentry for Children*, by Lester Walker, The Overlook Press, 1982 (available used at Amazon.com)
- 2. Play board games.** Collect board games that encourage creativity, teamwork and problem-solving, such as the game of SCATTERGORIES, Apples to Apples, Cranium, Set, Pictionary, iMAGiNiff and Quelf.
- 3. Solve puzzles.** Puzzle-solving as a group, not as individuals, enables teams to develop critical thinking strategies that will be helpful in solving task-based *Instant Challenges* that focus on math, logic and pattern analysis. Keep in mind that *Instant Challenges* will differ from these practice puzzles in that they are designed to have more than one solution. Work jigsaw puzzles, solve Sudoku puzzles, and play Set. Explore other types of puzzles. Possible resources include:
 - Set, available at www.setgame.com
 - The Puzzle Club, <http://www.thepuzzleclub.com>
 - Web Sudoku, <http://www.websudoku.com/>
 - Your local educational or classroom materials store
- 4. Put on a show.** Your team can select a fairy tale, nursery rhyme or commonly-known tale, but change the ending, characters, or setting. Students can dress up as the characters, put on a puppet show, or narrate the story with their own illustrations.
- 5. Go to a theatrical event.** As a group, attend a live theatrical performance at a local school, church or theater.
- 6. Explore improvisational & drama techniques.** Play charades and storytelling games, borrow books about drama from the library, and visit online sites specializing in improvisation and drama. Resources could include:
 - The Best of Charades for Kids (game), by Pressman, available at: www.pressmantoy.com
 - Rory’s Story Cubes: Let Your Imagination Roll Wild! (cube game or iPhone app), by Gamewright, available at www.gamewright.com or www.storycubes.com for the game, or at the iTunes App Store for the iPhone app
 - *Break a Leg! The Kids’ Guide to Acting & Stagecraft!*, by Lise Friedman, Workman Publishing, 2002
 - *Improvisation: Use What You Know – Make Up What You Don’t! 2nd Edition*, by Brad Newton, Gifted Psychology Press, 1998
 - *Kids Take the Stage: Helping Young People Discover the Creative Outlet of Theater*, by Lenka Peterson & Dan O’Connor, Back Stage Books, 1997
 - *The Ultimate Improv Book: A Complete Guide to Comedy Improvisation*, by Edward J. Nevrumont and Nicholas P. Hanson, Meriwether Publishing, 2001
 - *Theatre Games for Young Performers: Improvisations & Exercises for Developing Acting Skills*, by Maria C. Novelly, Meriwether Publishing, 1985
 - *101 Drama Games for Children and 101 More Drama Games*, both books by Paul Rooyackers, Hunter House Smart Fun Books, 1997 and 2002, respectively
 - *On Stage: Theater Games and Activities for Kids*, by Lisa Bany-Winters, Chicago Review Press, 1997
- 7. Explore team-building activities.** Inadequate team-building is the source of most team conflict. Play team-building games and participate in team-building activities. Resources are available through games, books and online sites. Resources could include:
 - Conversations to Go (game), by Moonjar, available at www.moonjar.com
 - Would You Rather...? (game), by Zobmondo, available at www.zobmondo.com

- Team Challenges: 170+ Group Activities to Build Cooperation, Communication, and Creativity, by Kris Bordessa, Zephyr Press, 2006
 - *Team-Building Activities For Every Group*, by Alanna Jones, Rec Room Publishing, 1999
 - *More Team-Building Activities For Every Group*, by Alanna Jones, Rec Room Publishing, 2002
 - *104 Activities That Build: Self-Esteem, Communication, Anger Management, Self-Discovery, Coping Skills*, by Alanna Jones, Rec Room Publishing, 1998
 - Wilderdom Group Activities, Games, Exercises & Initiatives, www.wilderdom.com/games/
 - Great Group Games (Web site), www.greatgroupgames.com/
 - Great Group Games (blog), <http://groupgames.wordpress.com/>
 - Great Solutions to Team Challenges, <http://greatsolutions.blogspot.com/>
8. **Host a theme party.** Using a birthday, holiday or food as an excuse, gather your team members and the ingredients for a cake, ice cream sundaes or pizza. Do NOT provide instructions (except minimally for safety or health reasons), then have team members bake a cake, assemble ice cream sundaes or build a pizza WITHOUT TALKING.
 9. **Conduct a scavenger hunt.** Ever wish your team knew more about connectors, extenders and controllers? Send them on a scavenger hunt for these items at the home improvement center, the office supply store, a craft store and a fabric shop. You (and they) will be amazed at what they find. Make sure everyone discusses how the items that are discovered might be used as connectors, extenders and controllers.
 10. **Practice Instant Challenge.** Besides the books and CDs you can purchase at www.idodi.org, there are many free *Instant Challenge* collections on the Web, as follows:
 - [Creative Problem Solvers](#) - Practice *Instant Challenges* compiled by Federico Felixberto, with contributions from DI volunteers
 - [cre8iowa Instant Challenge Library](#) - Practice *Instant Challenges* by Iowa student and adult volunteers
 - [Instant Challenge Goldmine](#) - 2008 DISC Scholarship entry by Ben from Virginia
 - [Montana Destination ImagiNation](#) - Practice *Instant Challenges*
 - [Ohio DI Region XIV Instant Challenges](#) - Practice *Instant Challenges*
 - [Practice Instant Challenges](#) - Trinity Valley North Central (Texas) Practice *Instant Challenge*
 - [Practice ICs](#) - Maine Destination ImagiNation
 - [Unofficial IC Guide from United Kingdom DI](#) - Illinois Destination ImagiNation
 - [Wisconsin Destination ImagiNation - St. Croix Region](#) - Instant Challenge of the Month
 11. **Fundraise for next year's program.** Who says fundraising can't be fun? Organize a community mini-golf course, obstacle course or mini-challenge stations, and charge participants for the privilege of playing. Locate appropriate activities at these Web sites:
 - Visit Bernie DeKoven's Junkyard Sports Web site at <http://www.junkyardsports.com/golf/potluck.html> to download a 10-page document that will tell you how to build a miniature golf course using a collection of recycled materials and found objects. DeKoven does ask you to donate any amount that you feel is appropriate in order to download this document, but it is well worth this price.
 - Visit DI Team Manager and writer Kris Bordessa's blog, "Great Solutions to Team Challenges," at <http://greatsolutions.blogspot.com>. Her blog is filled with activities that could be set up as challenge stations. Her book, *Team Challenges: 170+ Group Activities to Build Cooperation, Communication, and Creativity*, is also a wonderful resource for activities, and may be purchased online at www.amazon.com.
 - Visit the Wilderdom Web site at <http://www.wilderdom.com/games> to locate any number of team-building exercises and activities, group games, camp activities and more.
 12. **Ask your team to design Instant Challenges.** Students gain an inside understanding of *Instant Challenge* when they design their own. Feel free to submit these participant-designed *Instant Challenges* to cre8iowa's Instant Challenge Library by emailing them to cre8iowa@gmail.com. Download the following forms to make it easy for your team to write practice exercises:
 - <http://www.cre8iowa.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/IC-Template.pdf>