

**ACTING RIGHT**

**THE  
COOPERATION  
CHALLENGE**

**PHASE 1: INCLUSIVE GROUPING**

**BY SEAN LAYNE**



**TO ORDER THE COMPLETE BOOK:**

**ACTING RIGHT:  
BUILDING A COOPERATIVE,  
COLLABORATIVE, CREATIVE  
CLASSROOM COMMUNITY  
THROUGH DRAMA**

**VISIT**

[ArtsIntegrationConsulting.com](http://ArtsIntegrationConsulting.com)

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Focus 5, Inc. provides high-quality, professional learning opportunities and program consulting focused on aligning arts integration, best instructional practices, and current thinking in the field of arts and education. We collaborate and consult with teachers, teaching artists, schools, school districts, arts organizations, arts commissions, arts councils, and museums around the country. We are in classrooms on a daily basis to keep our work refined, relevant, and effective in the ever-growing and evolving field of arts integration and education.

We seek to be a national leader in the field of arts integration and educational consulting with a team of personable experts dedicated to high-quality education for all young people.

Our consulting staff includes National Board Certified teachers, professional artists, teaching artists, arts integration specialists, a technology specialist, and a reading specialist.

# SCRIPT

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## SETTING UP THE PLAYING FIELD

*Let's see how strong your cooperation muscles are.*

*They are not here, [Point to arms]*

*and they are not here. [Point to legs]*

*They are here. [Point to head]*

*You will have to SHOW me your cooperation muscles are strong. Here's how you will show me.*

*Right now, you are standing on the Playing Field.*

*Your challenge on the Playing Field is to follow my directions.*

*If you cannot follow my directions, you move from the Playing Field to a place in the game called the Observation Deck.*

*We will talk more about that place later.*

*Let's talk more about the Playing Field.*

*When you are on the Playing Field, your challenge is to follow my directions. Here is an example of a direction I might give you. Don't do it, just listen.*

*I might say something like: "By the time I count to 3, you are in a group that has more than two people." Then I will count, one, two, three.*

*When I get to the number three, you must be in groups of more than two people or ALL OF US move to the Observation Deck.*

*Let me show you how to make a group. [Select three students]*

*If these three students made a group of more than two, I would know because they turn and face each other.*

[Have the three students turn and face each other]

*And, so I know they really agreed to make a group, they will put their hands on each other's shoulders. Not their backs, not their heads, but their shoulders. They also put their hands on the closest shoulder to them—not the farthest one—reaching around would turn it into a hug. This is not a hug, it is a group.*

*If one person's hand is not on their neighbor's shoulder, this is NOT a group and ALL OF US move to the Observation Deck.*

*I change the numbers each time. So, you have to be listening.*

*And let's just say, in THIS game, ONE is not a group.*

*One more note: YOU WILL HAVE TO TALK in this game.*

*In a game like this, what do you think you will have to say?*

[Students should respond: "Get in this group." "Put your hands on my shoulders."]

*I will ONLY be giving you challenges where EVERYONE should be able to fit into a group. If someone is NOT in a group, it does not mean that student did not cooperate, it means the ENTIRE TEAM did not cooperate and we ALL move to the Observation Deck.*

## SETTING UP THE OBSERVATION DECK

*Since you will be going to the Observation Deck at some point, let me show you where it is and what you do when you are there.*

*The Observation Deck is over here—in front of me—on the floor.*

[Gesture to a place on the floor]

*It is not beside me or behind me. It's not over there, or in that chair, or under that table. It is right here on the floor. When you are in the Observation Deck, you do three things. I will show you.*

[Demonstrate]

- 1) The first thing you do is with your body—you sit down.*
- 2) The second thing you do is with your voice—you turn it off.*
- 3) The third thing you do is with your focal point—you make me your focal point.*

*You sit down, you are quiet, and you focus.*

*If you can sit down, control your voice, and stay focused, then you will be invited back to the Playing Field for the next round. If you are unable to sit down, control your voice, or focus while in the Observation Deck, you will not be invited back to the Playing Field for the next round.*

*The Observation Deck is NOT “Time Out.” You are NOT in trouble. You are still in the game. It is just a place we will go to talk about what we did or observed on the Playing Field. The game of baseball has two places—we are either sitting in the dugout waiting to bat, or we are out playing on the field. In both places, we are still in the game.*

*Let me double-check my directions. By the time I count to 5—without running, pushing, or falling, EVERYONE is seated on the Observation Deck. Go! One, two, three, four, five.*

(Students move to the Observation Deck.)

*I see everyone sitting down, quiet, and focused. How come no one is crying?*

[Students should respond: “We are not in trouble.”]

*Just checking! Thanks for reminding me!*

*Now, the way you get from there BACK to the Playing Field is by controlling your body. You should be strong enough to choose to stand up and walk back. If you run, push, or fall down, we are ALL moving back to the Observation Deck to discuss what controlling our bodies means. Let’s see who is strong enough to make the choice to control their body as they return to the Playing Field. Go! One, two, three, four, five.*

[Repeat if necessary]

## **PLAYING THE GAME**

*We are ready to play! Let’s give it a try.*

*I am NOT playing; do not grab me.*

*Here we go:*

[Give students challenges where they can all be in a group. Here are some suggestions:]

*By the time I count to five, you are in a group that has more than three people.*

*One, two, three, four, five.*

*By the time I count to seven, you are in a group that has more than 5 people.*

*One, two, three, four, five, six, seven.*

*By the time I count to eight, you are in a group that has less than 5 people.*

*One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight.*

*By the time I count to four, you are in a group that has at least one boy.*

*One, two, three, four.*

*By the time I count to six, you are in a group that has at least one person with the letter M in their first name. One, two, three, four, five.*

## **WHEN THEY FAIL**

At any point in the activity, if every student is not in a group, send ALL the students to the Observation Deck and reflect on what happened. Reflection should lead them to understand that anything that happens to one of them, happens to all of them. It is everyone's job to look out for everyone else. We all sink, or we all swim.

### **Ask these questions in the Observation Deck:**

- 1. What happened?*
- 2. Why didn't you do something about it?*
- 3. What are you going to do differently when you come back?*

Challenge students to answer all questions beginning with the word "I." Beginning with an "I" statement will force students to take personal responsibility for what happened.



**For example:**

**1. What happened?**

“I noticed Marcus did not get into a group.”

**2. Why didn't you do something about it?**

“I was just happy that I got into a group and did not think about Marcus.”

**3. What are you going to do differently when you come back?**

“Once I take care of myself, I will look around and make sure everyone else is taken care of, as well.”

Once a few students have reflected and you feel the group has a plan in place, invite them to return to the Playing Field and try again. Repeat THE SAME challenge that caused them to go to the Observation Deck.

Play until the students have mastered the concept of including everyone, all the time. Once they do this, give them a challenge that gets them all into one big group, such as a group greater than 15. Once they are in one big group, continue to give them challenges where they should be able to stay as one big group, such as a group with at least one boy or a group where someone was born in the summer. If they stay as one group, you know they are thinking as one team. If they subdivide, they are not wrong, they have not yet developed group awareness. Keep playing until they do.

At this phase, everyone is on the Playing Field, or everyone is in the Observation Deck. We all move from one space to the next as a whole group.