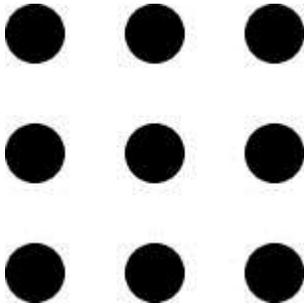


Teambuilding Game: Nine Dots

Thinking outside the box

Nine Dots



Group Size: Any size group

Age Range: elementary – adult

Intensity: Mental=2, Physical=1

Time: 5-30 minutes

Space: Minimal – Medium -- Lots

Set Up Time: 60 seconds

Props: paper and pencil for each person

Objective

Connect all nine dots with 4 or less lines.

Set Up / Preparation

Provide the 9 dots puzzle to the group (or individual) by handing out a piece of paper to each person, which contains a picture (copy) of the 9 dots. You can also show the group the 9-dot

puzzle on an overhead projector or on flip chart paper, asking participants to reproduce the puzzle on their own paper.

Rules

1. The lines must be straight.
2. When drawing the lines, the writing utensil (pen, pencil, etc.) may not be lifted off the paper.

Comments

I'll occasionally use this activity during a workshop to re-engage a group after a break. As people return (from lunch for example), I'll have this challenge projected on a screen. As people come in they work on it individually. This is a good brainteaser.

Debriefing Suggestions

1. Once you see the solution to this puzzle (see images of solutions below), you'll see that this challenge requires "outside the box" thinking.
2. When people talk about thinking outside the box, they are generally referring to a way of thinking that is not the usual. Inventors are usually seen as outside the box thinkers. For example, Alexander Graham Bell thought outside the box when he invented the telephone. Prior to Bell, people looked at wire and could only see the telegraph (where Bell saw the telephone!).
3. I like this activity because it requires people to think and act differently. We need people to think and act differently in order for them to excel at team skills.

Variations

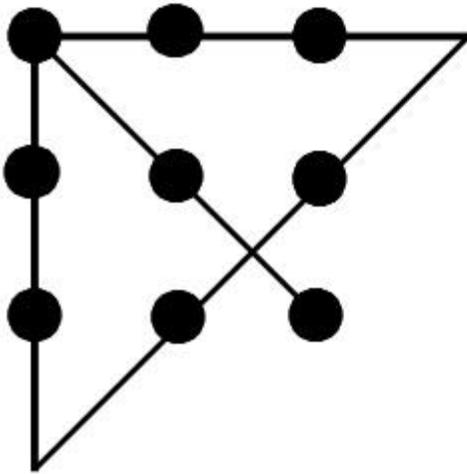
If someone is able to solve this challenge as stated, ask them to do it with only 3 lines. If they can do it in 3 lines, how about 2 lines? If they can do it with 2 lines, how about ONE line?

History

I learned this activity from a fellow teacher when I worked as a public school teacher.

Solutions

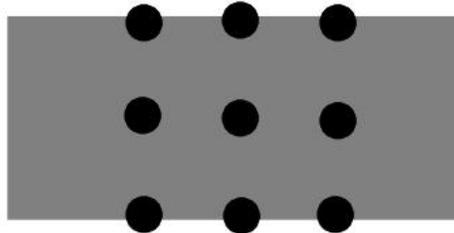
Click on the images below to view different solutions to this challenge.



Solution # 1

Solution # 2

Use a very wide magic marker to make one line that connects all 9 dots.



Solution # 3



Tear up the paper and line up the dots on a table then draw one line through all nine dots.

Another solution is to roll the paper into a cylinder and draw a continuous line at a slight angle that eventually goes through all 9 dots.

FROM: Tom Heck at TeachMeTeamwork.com

