Welcome back! As we begin the semester and you have completed your syllabus, are you looking for new ways to engage your students from the first day of class? In a blog post from Teachthought.com, the author suggests trying team-building games. These games encourage critical thinking and promote cooperation and communication. These suggestions can be used when you are looking for a change to start your semester off right!

1. **If You Build it...** - This team-building game is flexible. Simply divide students into teams and give them equal amounts of a certain material, like pipe cleaners, blocks, or even dried spaghetti and marshmallows. Then, give them something to construct. The challenge can be variable (think: Which team can build the tallest, structurally-sound castle? Which team can build a castle the fastest?). You can recycle this activity throughout the year by adapting the challenge or materials to specific content areas.

2. **Zoom** - Zoom is a classic classroom cooperative game that never seems to go out of style. Simply form students into a circle and give each a unique picture of an object, animal or whatever else suits your class. You begin a story that incorporates whatever happens to be on your assigned photo. The next student continues the story, incorporating their photo, and so on.

3. **The Worst-Case Scenario** - Fabricate a scenario in which students would need to work together and solve problems to succeed, like being stranded on a deserted island or getting lost at sea. Ask them to work together to concoct a solution that ensures everyone arrives safely. You might ask them to come up with a list of 10 must-have items that would help them most, or a creative passage to safety. Encourage them to vote — everyone must agree to the final solution.

While education technology is a basic and crucial component of the 21st century classroom, educators must still ensure that students are engaging with each other in meaningful ways. Team-building exercises are a great way to do this, and because of this, they will never go out of style. You can find more team building games [here](#).

For more information and support on ways to engage your students, contact us for a one-on-one consultation!

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