Coordination is one of the most important things a leader must do. Unlike cooperation (working with other people to achieve one’s own goal) or collaboration (working with other people toward a common goal), Coordination is aligning all those efforts to achieve a greater community/group goal.

**CONVERSATION STARTER:**
- How did you learn to tie your shoes? Try it now and think about your "method."

You may not realize it, but a task as simple as tying your shoes requires an amazing amount of Coordination. Coordination means organizing and working together effectively to achieve a common goal. If the goal is tying shoes, it means making the necessary hand and finger movements in the right order, and your brain usually serves as the coordinator of these physical efforts.

**EXPLORATION ACTIVITY:**
Divide participants into groups of three and assign roles:

1. **Coordinator** - gives the instructions to the others to achieve the goal.

2. **Right Hand** - puts left hand behind back; may not talk; must follow instructions.

3. **Left Hand** - puts right hand behind back; may not talk; must follow instructions.

- Following the instructions of the coordinator, the right and left hands tie the shoelaces.
- The first group to tie the shoe wins.
- Switch roles and try the other shoe.

**KEY OBJECTIVES:**
- Appreciate how complicated Coordination can be.
- Coordinate the efforts of a group to achieve a simple goal.

**WHAT YOU’LL NEED:**
- Participants to wear shoes with shoelaces that must be tied.

**FACILITATION TIP:**
- You might want to bring a few extra shoes with laces just in case everyone wears sandals that day.

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Exploring Leadership Series, Teamwork: Coordination
APPLICATION DISCUSSION:

- Did your Coordinator use the same method for tying shoes that you use when you are tying your own shoes?

- Was this task difficult? Why or why not?

- What Coordination strategies were the most effective? Least effective?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- What are some times in real life when you have to coordinate the work of other people?

- What strategies from this activity could be applied to those real life situations?

CONCLUSION:

In a team, the leader has to serve as the coordinator so that everyone’s work helps the team reach the goal. Today’s activity required a combination of two types of Coordination: organizing and working together. Coordination is a valuable leadership skill. Without it, we wouldn’t even be able to tie our shoes.

REFERENCES

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