



Exploring Leadership

TEAMWORK: COORDINATION

Coordination is an essential skill for any leader, as it helps align team efforts toward a common goal. Unlike cooperation (working with others to achieve a personal goal) or collaboration (working together toward a shared goal), coordination is about aligning everyone's efforts to reach a bigger goal that benefits the whole group. Coordination means using clear communication, good timing, and a shared goal to make sure everyone works smoothly together.

CONVERSATION STARTER:

How did you learn to tie your shoes? Try tying them now and think about your "method."

Tying your shoes might seem simple, but it takes careful coordination, with each movement happening in the right order. Your brain acts as the 'coordinator,' making sure each small movement happens in the right order. Good coordination ensures that every part works together smoothly, just like on a successful team.

EXPLORATION ACTIVITY:

Test your teamwork and coordination with a fun, hands-on shoelace challenge.

FACILITATION TIPS:

- Use a timer to keep things moving without rushing teamwork.
- Rotate roles so everyone gets to lead and follow.
- Remind students: coordination means guiding, not controlling.

KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Recognize how complex coordination can be, even in simple tasks.
- Work together to coordinate efforts and achieve a shared goal.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Participants need to wear shoes with shoelaces to tie
- Timer
- Optional: Extra shoes with laces, in case someone doesn't have laced shoes

- Divide into groups of three and assign each person a role.
 - Coordinator: Gives the instructions to help the group tie the shoelaces. Only the Coordinator is allowed to talk.
 - Right Hand: Puts their left hand behind their back and follows instructions silently.
 - Left Hand: Puts their right hand behind their back and follows instructions silently.
- Set a timer for 2 minutes.
- Begin the challenge: The Coordinator gives directions while the Right and Left Hands work together to tie the shoelaces without talking.
- Switch it up: The first group to finish wins. Then, switch roles so that everyone has a chance to be the Coordinator.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- Did you find this task difficult? Why or why not?
- Which coordination techniques worked best, and which didn't work as well?
- Did the coordinator use the same method you usually use to tie your shoes?

APPLICATION DISCUSSION:

- What are some real-life situations where you need to coordinate others' efforts?
- How could you adapt the strategies used here for different group settings, like a sports team, school project, or even at home?
- What qualities make someone an effective coordinator or team leader?



CONCLUSION:

A team leader acts as the 'coordinator,' aligning the team's efforts to achieve its goals. Today's activity showed that organizing and working together are key to success. When we coordinate well, even simple tasks—like tying shoes—become easier and more effective. As Henry Ford once said, "Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success." Strong coordination builds trust, strengthens teamwork, and helps us reach goals that would be hard to achieve alone.

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REFERENCES

- Learn How to Tie a Shoe Step by Step: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jKIB5UCrUrU> (2:08 minutes)
- Shoe Tying Tutorial: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_DiF3IFzOeM (1:03 minutes)
- Ask IFAS: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>