

Team Building from the Toy Aisle



MATTHEW BRODA

MABRODA@WOOSTER.EDU



MICHELLE CUMMINGS

MICHELLE@TRAINING-WHEELS.COM



TREVOR DUNLAP

TREVOR@NUHOP.ORG

Matthew Broda

Matthew Broda is a pre-service teacher educator, experiential facilitator, and environmental educator based in Wooster, Ohio. As an associate professor of education and chair of the Department of Education at The College of Wooster, he focuses on the integration of innovative pedagogies (i.e., experiential methodologies, immersive technologies, ecological sensibilities, etc.) into pre-service teacher curricula. Matthew is the co-founder of Switchback Designs (with co-author Trevor Dunlap), an experiential design firm known for its design thinking, innovation in curricular tool development and its outcome focused custom design process.

Michelle Cummings

Michelle Cummings M.S. is the Big Wheel and founder of Training Wheels, a known leader in the Team Development industry. She is an accomplished author and is a sought-after speaker and consultant on leadership, teambuilding, and experiential learning. Michelle has created a wide variety of facilitation, debriefing and teambuilding activities that have collectively changed the way trainers and educators work.

Trevor Dunlap

Trevor Dunlap is the Executive Director of Nuhop an experiential learning center focused on serving children with special needs through residential camp experiences, engaging students in outdoor education programs and facilitating engaging team building programs. Trevor is the co-founder of Switchback Designs, an experiential design firm known for its design thinking, innovation in curricular tool development and its outcome focused custom design process. Trevor engages with clients as a facilitator, trainer, collaborator and keynote speaker.

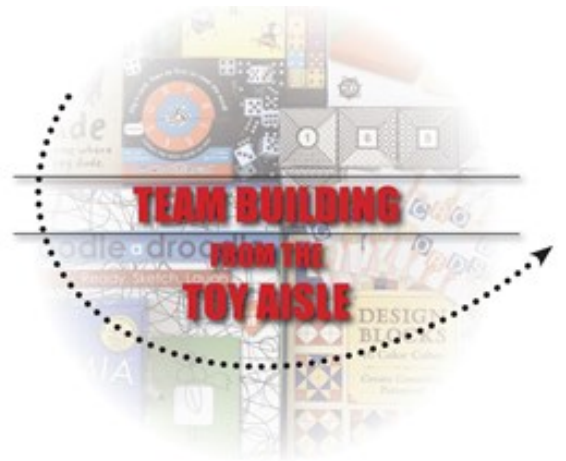


Team Building From the Toy Aisle

Let's Play!

It's time to open grandma's game closet and re-see some of the many toy and game classics (and new to you crowd favorites) in a new light. Using elements design, game-based, and experiential theories, we will deconstruct a wide range of existing mass-market games and re-envision them for use as purposeful and engaging tools for personal and organizational development.

Our focus in this book is on the deconstruction and assessment of readily accessible toys and games, not just on the toys and games themselves. Our ultimate goal is for you, the reader, to come away with a new set of tools that you can use to appraise any number of toys/games/activities you find in your local toy store or big box retailer.



WordARound™

Who knew that positioning a word in one continuous ring would make it so tricky to read? The challenge in WordARound™ is to quickly figure out where the word starts and be the first to shout it out before your friends do. It might sound simple, but you'll find yourself baffled. This quick-action game by Thinkfun gets better with the more players that play.

From Toy Aisle to Team Building:

We love quick-thinking games, especially when we can incorporate them into a great icebreaker. Developing your critical thinking skills will help you become a valued member of any team—at work, at school, or anywhere that solid decision-making skills are needed.



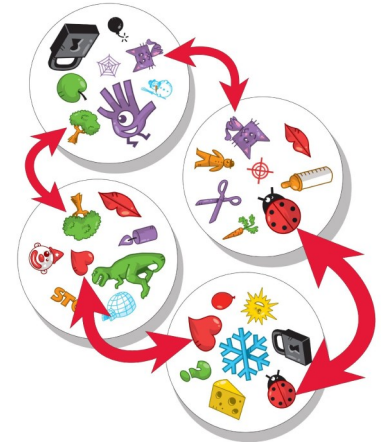
Quick Flip

- Distribute five cards to each person and invite participants to find a partner.
- Inform participants to notate the color of the top card in their opponent's hand. This will be the color ring they will be looking for when the card is flipped over.
- On your signal, have partners turn over their top card and race to identify the word in the matching colored ring. For example, if my opponent had a red card, I would be looking for the word in the red ring when the card is flipped over.
- Whoever finds the word first wins that round receives a point.
- Players then move that card to the bottom of their pile and find a new partner to play with.
- Encourage 5-6 partner exchanges or until someone achieves 10 points.

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Spot It

Spot It! Is a card game that is arguably one of the most popular family games in the country. More than 12 million copies of the game have been sold since its first release in 2009, with more than 500,000 sold each year in the United States alone. The basic structure of the game is this: the deck has 55 cards, with eight symbols on each card, culled from a bank of 57 symbols in total. If you choose any two cards at random, one symbol always matches. The original includes directions for several different ways to play, but they all hinge on the speed with which you spot the match—the padlocks, the ladybugs, the snowmen, etc. In the basic game, two players divide the deck into two. Each person turns over the top card of their deck. The first person to find the common symbol wins both cards to their side. The person with the most cards at the end of the game wins! A competitive version of ‘I Spy’ or ‘Where’s Waldo’, if you will.



From Toy Aisle to Team Building:

With the attributes of the cards always having one matching symbol, this translates beautifully into the team building world reinforcing the concept that we can always find a connection with others. No matter what our backgrounds, beliefs, upbringing or areas of interest are, through meaningful dialog we can always find a way to connect with the people around us. They are a perfect tool for Icebreaker activities, but we use them as a tool for facilitators to gauge the learning styles of their participants and as challenge and communication activities. We could not be more excited to share this tool with you.

Spot It - Common Bond

Give a card to each person in the group. Challenge everyone to pair up and find a matching item on their cards. When they do find a match, have them try to find something else in their lives that they have in common, a common bond. Once they are successful, have them move on to a new person and repeat the activity.

Spot It - Blind Find

Give a card to each person in the group and ask everyone to find a partner. Tell the group that (on your signal) they should study their own card for 20 seconds. Time can be adjusted based on age and ability of participants. Then, tell participants to hold their cards up next to their heads (at your count) so that their partners can see the card but they cannot. Have them attempt to find the match by looking at their partners' cards and recalling what is on their own. To continue, players trade cards and find someone new to play with.

Spot It - Championship Find

This is a fun, light-hearted, competitive (and noisy) activity. Give each person a card and ask everyone to find a partner. On your signal, have the partners turn over their cards and race to find the matching image. The person who finds the match first wins and takes the opponent's card. The person who lost joins the winner's "team" as an enthusiastic fan and cheerleader. Winners continue to play by finding another undefeated participant to play against, while their growing fan bases cheer them on. Play until one person has all the cards and all the fans. Congratulations!

Team Building From the Toy Aisle

Anomia

ANOMIA® [uh-NO-mee-uh] - noun - 1) A problem with word finding or recall. 2) Chaos. 3) The award-winning game where common knowledge becomes uncommonly fun!

Anomia is simple. Players flip cards until the symbols on two player's cards match. Matching players race to give an example of the category on their opponents card. Sounds easy, right? Think again. Wild Cards create unexpected matches and the simple act of losing a card can set off a chain of cascading face-offs! Pay attention, it could be your turn at any time!



From Toy Aisle to Team Building:

Anytime you can find one deck of cards with multiple applications is like winning a mini-lottery in the eyes of a facilitator. Traditional table-top card games and boardgames are designed for competition play, where there is likely a sole winner and one or more losers. In the team building field, many games are more cooperative in nature to highlight working together to achieve a common goal. However a good mix of competitive and cooperative initiatives can make for an even more well-rounded experience.

Quick Category Commonalities

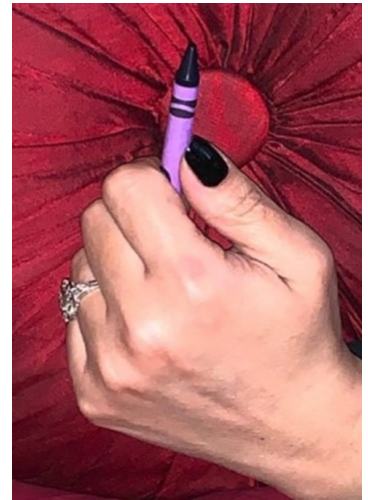
Give a card to each person in the group. Challenge everyone to pair up and find a matching item on their cards. When they do find a match, have them try to find something else in their lives that they have in common, a common bond. Once they are successful, have them move on to a new person and repeat the activity.

- Remove all wild cards and blank cards from the deck. Distribute one Anomia card to each participant and describe what makes these cards unique. On the cards players will find a word and a symbol. Both are relevant during the game.
- Inform the group that you will shout out a specific way the group is supposed to group up, and that they have 10 seconds to get into the appropriate group. For example, you might yell out, "Group by Symbols!" Begin a countdown from 10, 9, 8... and the group has ten seconds to find everyone else that shares the same symbol on their card that they do. (Adjust the time based on the functioning level of your group.)
- Give the group 90 seconds to identify one thing they all have in common.
- Have each group quickly announce what their commonality is.
- Announce another category, and participants have 10 seconds to get into a new group.
- Give the group 90 seconds to identify another thing they all have in common that was not previously mentioned in the last round.
- Repeat this process for two rounds.
- Here are suggested categories: Symbols or Man-made vs Natural

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Crayons

If there is one childhood scent so potent that it can transport you back to your first-grade classroom, it is a new box of crayons. The nose knows the significance of the memories and emotions tied to that colorful, crisp box, just budding with potential. You almost hated to even use them with their chiseled perfection, but the invention of the built-in sharpener on the back was a true game-changer. Ahhhh the memories...



From Toy Aisle to Team Building:

Have you ever examined the manufacturer-given name for each color and wonder how they narrowed down and decided upon each color name? Like Cornflower Blue... who decided that name? When you hear the word cornflower would you automatically think of the color blue? The label defines what the color is, however, I'm sure children select it because it is a shade of blue rather than identifying it by the manufacturer name. That's the funny thing about labels, sometimes they speak to you and sometimes they don't.

Cornflower Blue

- Invite each participant to select a crayon from the container without looking at it, and grip it where the flat end of the crayon is covered by their enclosed fist, and the chiseled tip end of the crayon is exposed. This should disguise the manufacturer-given name of the crayon that is printed on the wrapper.
- Ask participants to keep the color name on the wrapper hidden and to not look at it themselves.
- Invite participants to organize themselves in a line, alphabetically, by the manufacturer-given name of the color of their crayon (the name given by Crayola) without revealing the wrapper.
- For purposes of simplicity, use ROYGBIV (Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, Violet) as your color model and eliminate the white and black crayons. The intent behind this is to avoid the discussion of the absence of color on the color wheel, not the absence of racial diversity.
- When the team feels they are in the correct order, ask them to reveal their crayons, and discover whether they are in alphabetical order.
- Start at the beginning of the line and Invite participants to announce the name they gave their color vs what is on the label.

Team Building From the Toy Aisle

Dice Games ~ Tenzi

Okay, my friends, it's time to buckle in because we are going way back for this next set of games, back so far that it is even before recorded history! We're not even sure where dice originated. Some people believe that the origins of dice, go back to the days of fortune-telling when people used pieces of a hoof, called knucklebones, to help them foretell the future.

From Toy Aisle to Team Building:

Dice games are exciting, precise, and full of sophisticated strategies and problem-solving. Here is one of the multiple dice games we included in Team Building From the Toy Aisle:



Onesies, Twosies

- Ask the larger group to get into teams of 4-6 people.
- Ask the teams of 4-6 to find a space in the room as their playing area.
- Leave at least a few feet between groups for playing comfort.
- Describe the rules of the exercise:
- Tell teams that their goal is to be the fastest and best die rollers around.
- Each group is to roll their set of dice as fast as possible to achieve a sequence of desired results.
- During the first round, all teams are required to roll until all die display a “one.”
- Once one die has shown a “one” they will stop rolling that particular die and continue to roll for “ones” on all the remaining dice.
- As soon as their team has “ones” showing on all 10 dice, they will yell “ONESIES” to signify a stoppage in play.
- The team that yells “ONESIES” first is the winner of that round.
- For the second round, the winning team (the one that yelled “ONESIES”) will move onto trying to roll “twos” on all 10 of their dice, while the remaining teams must restart their attempt to roll 10 “ones”.
- Whichever team is successful first will yell either “ONESIES” or “TWOSIES”, depending on which number they were rolling for, signifying a stoppage in play.
- The third round begins with each team rolling for their respective numbers. That number is determined based on what they have successfully rolled to that point.
- This process continues with “ONESIES”, “TWOSIES”, “THREESIES”, “FOURSIES”, “FIVESIES”, and eventually “SIXIES” until one team moves all the way up the numerical ladder.
- The team who makes it all the way to “SIXIES” first is the ultimate winner.

Team Building From the Toy Aisle

Design Blocks

Way back in the early 1900s, a company in Albany, New York, created a wooden toy consisting of sixteen cube-shaped blocks, each with a different color or pair of colors painted on every one of its six faces. These blocks could be arranged any way you wanted to create a dizzying number of beautiful patterns, each one a small artwork in wood. Pomegranate Kids took the inspiration from this bit of toy history and created Design Blocks.



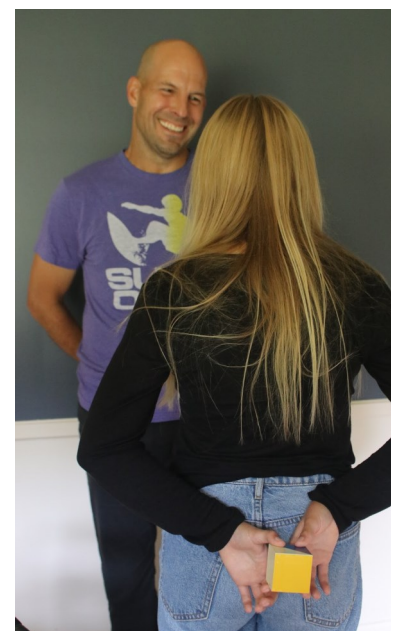
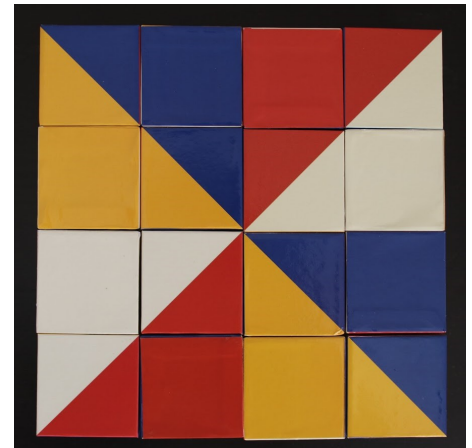
From Toy Aisle to Team Building:

Naturally we have found so many ways to use blocks in the team-building process. The Design Blocks from Pomegranate Kids are rich with simple design yet allow for complexity. Just like child development, these blocks are designed for individual or partner play. To move the needle towards a more complex system of team process, we have created gameplay options using the blocks as the tool to unpack team behavior.

Here is one of several games included in the book that uses Design Blocks.

Hidden Blocks

- Project a pattern onto a screen.
- Give each participant a Design Block
- Tell participants that they are going to work with the other players in the room to create a replica of the pattern design that will be displayed on the screen.
- Tell the participants that they must hold their blocks behind their backs. Each participant is responsible for their block and is not allowed to trade their block with others.
- Share with participants that when you say go that they are to walk around the room to determine which piece of the pattern they will complete.
- Tell participants that they must seek guidance and information from others to determine how to orient themselves to the design pattern on the screen and with other players.
- Instruct participants that their goal is to be in position when time is called whereas when complete that their position will be in the correct sequence as the design displayed.



Team Building From the Toy Aisle

Itzi

ITZI is a simple and fast letter-based card game from the creators of TENZI, SLAPZI, and PAIRZI. ITZI is an easy to learn, fast-paced word-based card game focused on quick thinking and playful response. There are many ways to engage with both the letters and colors. The cards are designed in two ways:

- Letter/ Icon Cards
- Category/ Icon Cards

The ITZI creation story begins with one of the co-designers Kevin's disdain for extended car trips. So to pass the time on such trips he'd call out two letters to his fellow passengers and they'd try to be the first to call out the name of a famous person, place, or thing with those same two initials.



Kevin tried to turn his simple letter-game into an actual game, but couldn't quite get all the pieces to fall into place. So like many game makers, Kevin thought about how to make this simple letter game into an actual physical game and couldn't get it right so the idea was tabled for a while. A few years later Kevin and his sister dug out the game. They realized that playing with just one letter was faster and simpler than with two and that it was way more fun to play with a lot of categories.

Meanwhile, their friend and co-creator Steve had been toying with a letter game of his own, but couldn't quite bring it around. Like with TENZI and SLAPZI before, good things happened when Kevin and Steve put their heads together and ITZI was born. ITZI is a product of TENZI the popular DIE game.

From Toy Aisle to Team Building:

Like the ITZI creation story above, when the three of us sat down and opened the box of ITZI cards during the Teambuilding from the Toy Aisle writer's retreat, it was like a fireworks display of ideas. For many seasoned facilitators, there are those moments where you see a tool or a widget and you know that that thing has the IT factor. ITZI is just that tool. Although it is simple in design, the ITZI cards are rich with colors and icons that allow for so many opportunities for scaffolded gameplay and facilitation.

So how did we perceive the development of these cards from the Toy Aisle to Teambuilding? We used the essence of the card design to create ten iterations of games that allow for physical engagement, a reimagination of existing team-building exercises, and new activities that will allow for all levels of group interaction. These cards made it so easy to use their simple design to provide many opportunities for deep engagement and gameplay.

We included one of **several games** in this handout. There are multiple more games included in the book that uses Itzi Cards

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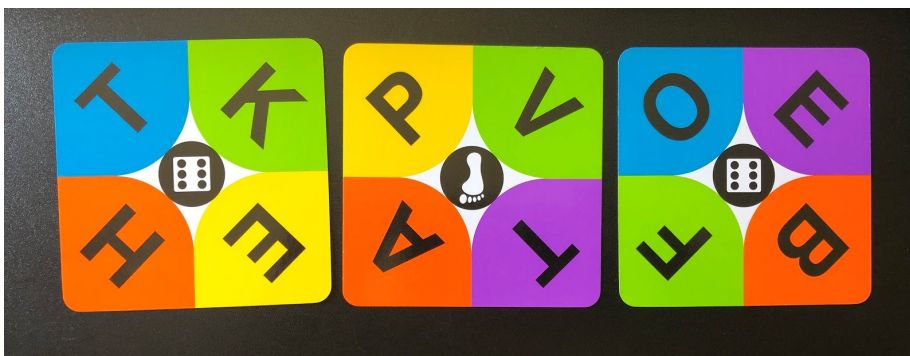
Itzi

Let's Get Wordy!

- Take all of the ITZI letter cards and separate them from the rest of the deck.
- Set the ITZI category cards aside and get ready for gameplay.
- Give one ITZI letter card to each person in the group.
- Leave a pile of index cards and pens accessible in the middle of the room.
- Tell the participants that they are going to form into groups based on the size of the words you as the facilitator will ask them to form.
- Begin by asking participants to get into teams of three and form as many three-letter words as they can with the ITZI cards they have in their hands. Remind them that the ITZI letter cards have two sides that can be used in play
- For example, the participants may have the following cards:



- With these cards as pictured above participants could make the following words: COB, SOD, MOB, etc.
- Flip the cards over as illustrated below and you can make even more words: BAT, TOE, TAB, FAT, etc



- Instruct the participants to use the front and backs in different sequences, and see how many more combinations of three-letter words they can find.
- Ask participants to assign a scribe to keep track of all the words they create during each round of play.
- Tell participants that you will follow the same process for other size words ie. 4, 5, 6, 7, etc. while creating the same number letter of words as there are people in the group.
- Tell participants that they can only use one letter per card when forming words.

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by Matthew Broda, Michelle Cummings and Trevor Dunlap

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Why Write a Book Like This?

Good question! In an age where a simple search for "team development" can yield an overwhelming array of disparate opinions and options, what can a text like this contribute to the conversation? How can it help you make sense of the noise?

First, our focus in this book is on the deconstruction and assessment of readily accessible toys and games, not just on the toys and games themselves. Our ultimate goal is for you, the reader, to come away with a new set of tools that you can use to appraise any number of toys/games/activities you find in your local toy store or big box retailer. We don't want to tell you what to buy, we want to teach you how to buy!

This book will include over 50 new activities that have been re-engineered from existing games or toys you can find in your favorite toy aisle.

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