Traffic Jam Activity

Teacher Lesson Plan

Here's the problem:

There are seven stepping stones and six people. On the three left-hand stones, facing the center, stand three of the people. The other three people stand on the three right-hand stones, also facing the center. The center stone is not occupied.

The challenge: exchanging places

> Everyone must move so that the people originally standing on the right-hand stepping stones are on the left-hand stones, and those originally standing on the left-hand stepping stones are on the right-hand stones, with the center stone again unoccupied.

The rules:

1. After each move, each person must be standing on a stepping stone.
2. If you start on the left, you may only move to the right. If you start on the right, you may only move to the left.
3. You may "jump" another person if there is an empty stone on the other side. You may not "jump" more than one person.
4. Only one person can move at a time.

Introducing the activity

Large movement experience:

Each group of 6 students is given 7 sheets of paper to use as stepping stones. Areas of the room are assigned to each group and the activity begins.

Allow enough time for groups to try to find the minimum number of moves necessary to complete the task.