



Brain Break

Mirror neurones

- Individual
- Pairs
- Small group
- Whole group

Uses: This is a paired activity that invites participants to connect together and work as a team without communicating verbally.

Resources: None.

Time: 5 minutes.

What to do:

1. Participants working in pairs, stand facing each other. One person is nominated as the leader and the other the follower. They raise their palms out in front of them, very close but not touching.
2. The leader is able to move his/her hands separately or together, as they want. The follower has to follow, trying to keep up with the leader, keeping their palms close but not touching.
3. Swap roles so everyone can have a go at being both the leader and the follower.

Make it different:

- Add some music, (slow at first) and ask the leader to move to the music. Change the music and add something with a bit of tempo... watch the neurones dance!

Points to make:

- A mirror neuron is a neuron which fires both when an animal performs an action or when the animal watches the same action performed by another animal. Thus, the neuron 'mirrors' the behaviour of another animal, as if they were themselves performing the action.
- These neurones are believed to exist in humans and in some birds.
- Some scientists consider mirror neurons one of the most important findings of neuroscience in the last decade.
- Some believe that these neurones might be very important in imitation; how we develop our language and the way we empathise with other people.