

Marble Tracks

"Marble Tracks" is a problem-solving activity that is suited well to a class-size group or multiple smaller groups.

Materials

1. You will need one "Marble Track or Ramp" for each student. I use two different materials for this depending on the group.
 - a. **Older students:** Plastic molding is corner molding that can be found at a home improvement/hardware store like Home Depot. It is easy to cut and works well for marble ramps for older students.
 - b. **Younger students:** Foam ramps are made of foam pipe insulation that can also be found at home improvement/hardware stores like Home Depot. It usually comes in four foot pieces and can be split in two with a scissors and cut into sections of the desired length(s).
2. One marble for each group.

Procedure

After reviewing safety rules (marble tracks are not weapons/swords and they are to be held still at your side until the directions have been given), tell the students that they are to get a marble from one designated point to another with the following parameters:

- The marble may only touch a marble track during the process.
- When the marble is in contact with your track, your feet may not move.
- The marble may touch only one marble track at a time.
- When the marble is in contact with your track, you may not let go of your track.
- If the marble touches anything besides a marble track (fingers, clothing, furniture, wall, floor, nose, etc) it must start over at the beginning point.

Other Considerations

You may have your entire class act as one group moving one marble from Point A to Point B. However, participation will be much greater if you divide the class into groups giving each group their own marble and goal.

Debrief

- I usually use the typical What, So What, Now What format.
- This can be a good activity to discuss roles people play in a group and how that affects the group.
- I never specifically tell groups that they are competing with each other, but that is often what happens. Debriefing that can be interesting and telling.