

The Slowest Step

Facilitator note: The engine is the bottleneck: a line - of people, of work, of a morning - moves only as fast as its slowest step, so you staff the slowest step, you never hurry the fast ones, and you keep walking the line because the slow step moves when you fix it. Three balances to hold in discussion. First, the senior's objection is honored, not mocked: "chessed isn't a factory" deserves the two-part answer it gets (the love is in the bags arriving; and the experiment, which lets evidence decide). Second, Tzali's own work looks like nothing - he barely fills a bag - and is the most useful in the room: the coordinator's craft is watching, and boys should hear that managing a flow is real work, not a failure to work. Third, the hidden dividend is people's patience: the thirty-five-minute room sang because nobody was exhausted; pace protects kindness. The home coda (the basket by the door) is the engine in miniature: he fixes the slow step and never hurries a person.

Teacher answer key

Activity 1: 1. Thirty boys each made whole bags - walking, waiting, reaching past each other; the room was full of motion and the bags came out at the speed of congestion, with cards running out and tempers lost. 2. Food 10 seconds, juice 8, card-and-ribbon 40; the line can only move at the speed of the slowest step, so the ribbon is "the whole night." 3. Stations with boys staying put and bags traveling; six fastest boys on ribbons because the slowest step gets staffed hardest; runners and a checking table. 4. The food table clogs, then the checking table; he moves two ribbon boys to food, then counts alongside the checkers - he watches the line and rebalances.

Activity 2: 1. Guess (it took three hours). 2. Guess (31 vs 74). 3. Fact. 4. Guess (he barely filled a bag - he walked the line).

Activity 3: Sample answers - 1. Busy is motion; output is finished bags. Walking, waiting, and reaching are motion without output. 2. The love is in the bags arriving full and right; and the ten-minute experiment - evidence, not argument. The second is stronger because it is checkable. 3. People report how they feel ("we're working hard"); the pile reports where the system actually fails.

Activity 4: 1. (a) The extra hands go to fruit-cutting - the slowest step sets the line's speed. (b) She rebalances - moves a hand from the now-faster step to drinks; she does NOT shout or hurry everyone. 2. Faster motion at the fast steps changes nothing; only the slowest step sets output - hurrying is walking faster. 3. Open; look for a named slow step and a staffing fix.

Activity 5: 1. LINE. 2. BAGS. 3. COUNT. 4. PILE.

Activity 6: 1-b, 2-c, 3-d, 4-a.



Activity 7: LINE row 1 columns 1-4; RIBBON row 2 columns 1-6; BAGS row 3 columns 1-4; SLOWEST row 4 columns 1-7; STATION row 5 columns 1-7; PACKING row 6 columns 1-7; COUNT row 7 columns 1-5; PILE row 8 columns 1-4

Activity 8: Open response; look for the pile correctly located and a fix that adds capacity there rather than speed elsewhere.