Name/Title: It Happens Like This! Catch a Disease Health Activity!

Purpose of Event: To show how a pathogen can pass from person to person via close contact. Pre-pandemic I used this lesson in class to teach about STDs, but it can be applied to other pathogens.

Suggested Grade Level: 6-8

Materials Needed:
I've adapted this activity from an in-class one for use during remote learning on Microsoft Teams. I assume that it will work on Google Meets, Zoom, etc, although I have not tried it on those platforms. You'll need to rapidly/randomly assign students to breakout rooms.

If you are reading this you are already a resourceful teacher who is getting through a pandemic. You'll figure a way to adapt this to your school's platform.

Description of Idea

Ask a student to pick a number between 1 and (number of students in that class) without telling them why. If, for example, the number 3 is picked, have them write down the number 3. You will make a note of the name of the 3rd student on your roster.

Tell them that you will put them into breakout rooms. For this example we'll say 4 rooms, but of course use your own judgement.

Once they are in the rooms they will have 1 minute to write/type a list of everyone who is in the room. The list should be alphabetical by first name and their lists must be in agreement. (look! lang arts tie in!) You can do it by last name if you wish, it won't matter as long as the lists are identical.

While they are doing this in their rooms you should make a note of where student number 3 is. Student #3 is the student who has the pathogen. Everyone whose name is listed AFTER that person in their breakout room is infected with the pathogen. Don't tell them this yet.

End the breakout rooms, return to the main chat, and ask a student from room 1 to read their alpha list. Ask the others from room 1 if they agree with that order. Then do the same for rooms 2-4. This is the end of round one. You should make a note of who student #3 has infected before round 2 starts.

For round 2, randomly assign them to breakout rooms again and give them the same task of making an alpha list of who is in the room. This time you need to keep track of not only who student 3 infects, but who the other infected students from round 1 are now infecting this round. Again, whoever is listed after them on their alpha lists in now infected. (modify as you see fit)

Depending on your class size (and how many students are infected) you can do this for 3-5 rounds. I try to stop when maybe 1/3 of the class is infected.

Bring them back to the main chat and explain to them the significance of picking the number at the start, who has become infected, and how. Explain that this simulates close contact/sexual contact. I often draw a comparison of a college campus and point out how an STD can spread in a community like that.

Variations:

During Non Pandemic times, I do this activity by putting a colored dot on the back of a 3x5 card, placing the card into a stack of (my class size), and having students pick up a card as soon as they enter before they start their Do Now. The activity in class involves them getting X number of people to sign their cards (make them get up or they will only pass them to the students near them and there is no spread). Then I ask them to turn the cards over and have the person with the dot come up with their card. The dot indicates they were infected. I bring up everyone who signed that student's card AND anyone whose card was signed by that student. (the 2 may not be the same) Then I ask anyone who has had their card signed by any of the students who are standing with me to stand at their desks as well, indicating that they are also infected.

Assessment Ideas:

For me, the class discussion afterwards was often enough of a debrief. I've toyed with the idea of having students do a reflection via a google form to gauge where they were at, but haven't acted on it yet.

Submitted by **Michael Harnett** who teaches at Churchill Jr High School in East Brunswick, NJ. Thanks for contributing to PE Central! **Posted on PEC: 3/9/2021**.

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