

## Life's a Puzzle

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### Setup:

You will need to buy six simple kids puzzles at the dollar store for this activity. Make sure that five of the puzzles are very similar in size, colors, etc. (I usually buy two 48-piece Disney princess puzzles and three 48-piece Disney Cars puzzles from Dollar Tree). The sixth puzzle should be something entirely different (smaller pieces, different colors, etc.). Dollar Tree usually has a dinosaur or pirate puzzle that isn't even a rectangle when finished.

Take the first princess puzzle and remove five pieces. Take the second princess puzzle and do the same. Switch the five pieces so that each puzzle has five wrong pieces. Take the three Cars puzzles and do the same. The end result should be that each puzzle has five pieces from another team's puzzle. Finally, divide all of the dinosaur pieces equally among the five puzzles.

### In Class:

1. Hand out one puzzle to each team.
2. Instruct them to complete what is in the box. Provide no other instructions. Ignore questions and just repeat the instruction to complete what is in the box.
3. Observe students as they work in the group. Time them on how long it takes them to start working with other teams to complete their given puzzle. When do they start asking for pieces? Are they direct? Do they just whine about not having what they need? Observe what happens to the dinosaur puzzle. Does one team take ownership? Does no one? Does one person take on the entire puzzle?
4. Have them put puzzles back into the correct boxes. I recommend using Ziploc bags inside the boxes to help organize.
5. Reflect with students on the process. What was challenging? Did anyone feel like they took on a leadership role? Were there any freeloaders? Why did it take so long to start asking other groups for help? What worked best to get the pieces you needed? Give them your observations. Ask them how this relates to their classes. What happens when you are missing pieces? This discussion can go many directions.