**Bean Bag Activity**

**Do this activity while teaching the components of the communication model.**

**Explain that you are the sender and that the bean bag is the message. Ask a student to play toss with you and be the receiver. Explain that you will throw the bean bag back and forth while having a simple conversation.**

**For instance, I say, “Hello, how are you?” while I throw the bean bag. The student responds with, “Fine, and you?” while tossing it back to me.**

**Demonstrate encoding by throwing the ball too short or too long. Explain that effective communication occurs when the sender gets the message to the receiver in the best possible way, like the bean bag reaching the student right where they are. The sender’s job is to make their message as clear and easy as possible for the receiver to decode it as intended. (I talk a lot about the decisions I make when throwing the bean bag—the trajectory, the force, the speed, the distance, etc. Then I compare that to the decisions we make when structuring a message, or encoding. The visual helps them understand the concept.)**

**Discuss how the classroom influences how we play toss. We have limited space and there are people and things in the room that we must account for. This is how context affects the game and the same is true in communication. Give some examples of context affecting communication.**

**Adapt the game and have another student be the interference. Explain that we cannot always get rid of interference but we always need to consider it and try to avoid it. Demonstrate by playing keep away.**