

Challenge: I Spy



Content It's easy to look, but easier to miss things. Seeing is vital to Search and Rescue; trying these activities will make sure your eyes are open.

Activities Scouts and Guides

- Where's Wally?
- Take part in a patrol lane to see how many objects you can spot.
- Talk about what makes items easier or more difficult to spot and share top spotting tips. Then try the patrol lane again. Don't forget your cube!
- If it happens to be getting dark, try the activity again to see what difference it makes.
- Try out line searches like on TV.

Senior Section, Explorers and Network

- Find the hidden meanings.
- When looking for a missing person, what sort of objects might you find? How would you know what's relevant and what can we learn from them?
- Take part in a patrol lane to see how many objects you can spot. What makes items easier or more difficult to spot?
- Talk about or use the four components of an Efficient Search (Northumbrian Rain Dance, critical separation, searchers' cube and purposeful wandering).

Background

Where's Wally?

Believe it or not CSI (crime scene investigator) trainees are introduced to "Where's Wally" as a tool to learn how to search in a systematic way. Most good book shops should have a "Where's Wally" book

for a reasonable price. In pairs or small groups have the Scouts and Guides find Wally. Have them then explain how they searched the picture. Hopefully they would explain that they divided the picture into small squares and once happy that the square did not contain Wally they moved onto the next one.

Get participants to look at another “Where’s Wally” picture and to use a different technique to see if Wally is found more quickly or not.

Patrol Lane

A patrol lane is a way that searchers practice their “searching the cube” technique. Throughout a search it is important that a searcher always looks around him/her in order to ensure that nothing is missed. In order to remind everyone about this we refer to “The Searcher Cube”, a box with six-sides with the searcher in centre, each side of which the searcher must look at. In other words the searcher must look forward, backwards, left, right, up and down.

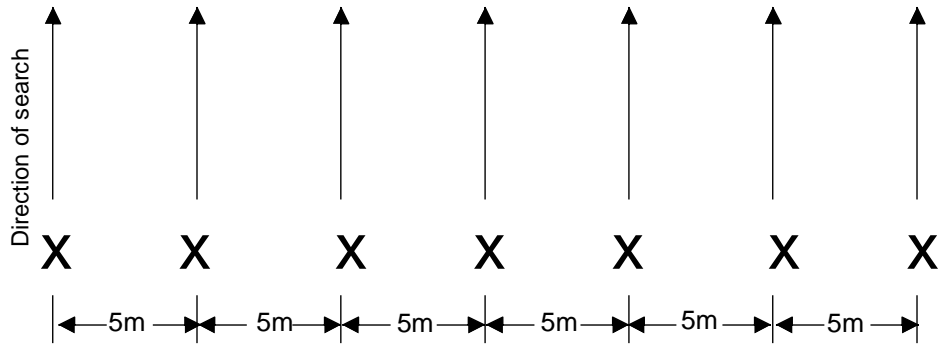
Choose a footpath and place 10 items of different size and colour along the edges / hedges of a route of about 50 metres. These should be items typically a searcher would be looking for, for example, items of clothing, a walking stick, a mobile phone or perhaps something that someone could have dropped. Choose the location of each item carefully as they should be visible from the footpath, so the searcher must stay on the path, but not necessarily easily seen without taking care with the search cube. Some items should just have a portion of it visible, perhaps poking out from behind a tree. Others should be placed such that they can only be seen if you look behind you, and don’t forget to put something up high.

Have a leader accompany participants one at a time down the patrol lane to count the number of “finds”.

After a discussion of how well each team has done have searchers go back down the patrol lane and see if they improve. Show them where items are that they missed.

Line Search

This basic search method consists of a long line of searchers spaced about 5 metres apart and everyone moves forward together. Although this a very good search pattern it is manpower intensive and slow. Also when searchers are walking in open country there is the tendency to talk to each other so clues could be missed. As peripheral vision is being relied upon for the area between the searchers small objects close to the line could be a problem.



A small modification was made to the line search by the military to overcome this. The “Military” variant of the line search consists of overlapping lines with searchers spaced 10 metres apart to cope with the peripheral vision problem and to cut down chatting.

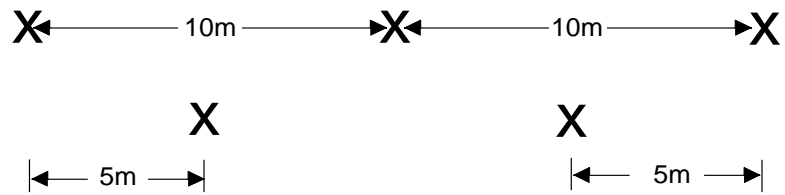


Figure 2 - Military version of line search

Place different size objects for both types of line searches and test how successful they are.

As we all know, Search is an Emergency. Our misper may require emergency medical care, and in many cases is likely to die if not found quickly. Therefore we cannot afford the luxury of this intensive style of searching. This is where the Efficient Search comes into play. The Efficient Search is the most effective trade-off between speed, manpower and detection. When it is done properly, the Search Coordinator knows s/he has the best chance of finding the misper in that area, with the most efficient use of resources. This allows areas to be searched quicker, and larger areas to be covered with the manpower available. This can only mean one thing – that the misper is getting the best possible response to their emergency.

So what are the four components of an Efficient Search? They are The Northumbrian Rain Dance, Critical Separation, The Searcher Cube and Purposeful Wandering.

The Northumbrian Rain Dance

This technique is used to estimate the distance at which a searcher can see an object at the edge of his/her vision, in the terrain being searched. This is essential to calculating the Critical Separation. How is it done?

First you need an object about the size of what you are looking for. A rucksack is usefully about the size of a small child. This is then placed in the terrain being searched. Two searchers then make their way around the object, moving in and out until they can just about see the object. (See Fig 1)

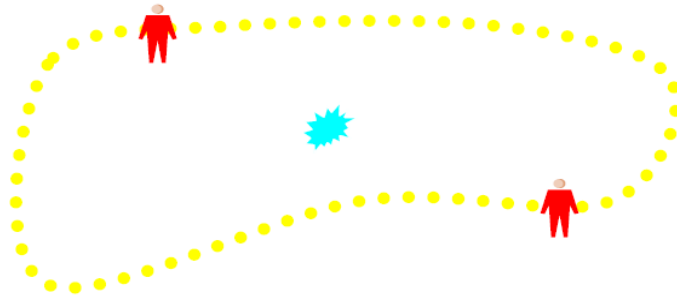


Fig 1. The Northumbrian Rain Dance

This gives an estimate of that crucial distance – that whereby an object can be seen at the edge of a searcher’s vision. It is only an estimate. We use Purposeful Wandering to negate this estimation, as explained later.

Critical Separation

Critical Separation is defined as the distance between two searchers whereby they can see an object at the edge of their vision. So we have estimated this distance using our Northumbrian Rain Dance. In order to calculate the distance between the searchers we need to double this distance. (See Fig 2)

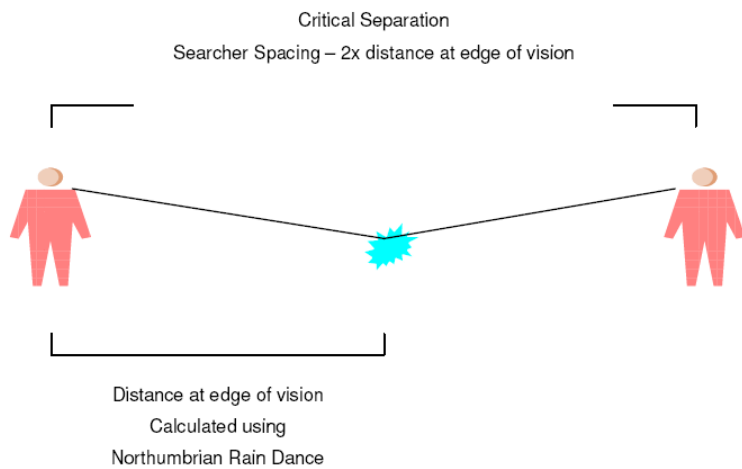


Fig 2. Critical Separation

Therefore a team leader, having done a Northumbrian Rain Dance, will space out his/her searchers at a distance twice that which was estimated as the distance at edge of vision. The searchers are then said to be at Critical Separation. This distance is obviously dependant on the terrain being searched. Should this change during the search; the Critical Separation would need to be re-calculated using our Northumbrian Rain Dance.

Critical Separation is the cornerstone of almost every search undertaken

The Searcher Cube

Throughout a search it is important that a searcher always looks all around him/herself, in order to ensure that nothing is missed. In order to remind everyone about this we refer to The Searcher Cube, a box with six-sides each of which the searcher must look at. (See Fig 3)

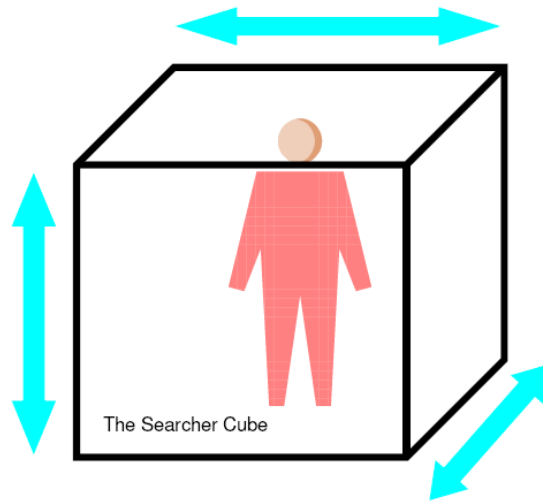


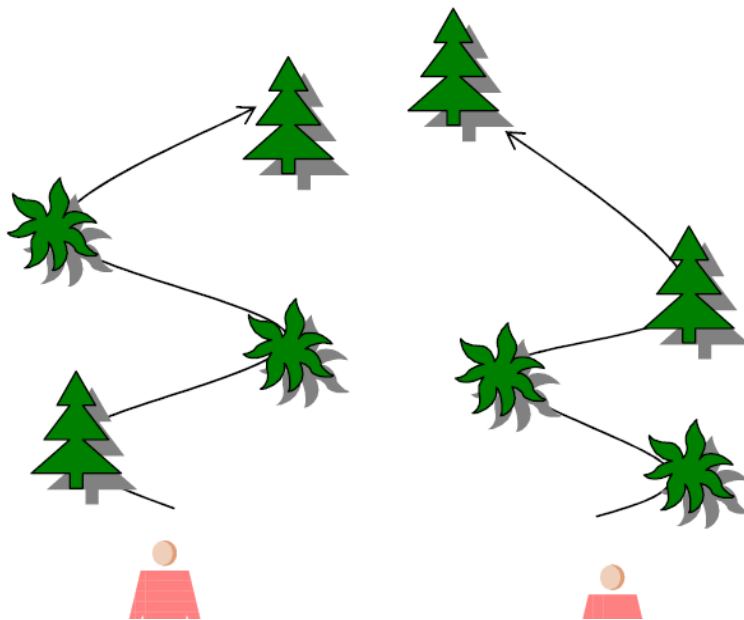
Fig 3. The Searcher Cube

This is used to illustrate that a searcher must look forward, but also backwards, left, right, up and down.

How often? This goes back to our Northumbrian Rain Dance. The dimensions of the box are that which an object can be seen at the edge of vision – as estimated with our Northumbrian Rain Dance.

Purposeful Wandering

Our final technique is designed to 'even-out' the fact that we had to estimate our Critical Separation using the Northumbrian Rain Dance. This estimation does not allow for the fact that some areas could be quite clear, whilst others may be thicker and require more attention. Our searchers therefore meander through their search area. This is not meaningless and done without thought! What our searcher is actually doing is concentrating on those areas that require more attention, and searching visually (but without actually moving through them) those areas s/he can see are clear. (See Fig 4)



As can be seen above, our searchers do not search the areas between the trees and bushes. It can be seen already that our misper is not here. But they purposefully wander to the trees and bushes (and ditches, fallen logs etc. etc.) and search those areas. They search only those areas that need searching because some of the lighter, less dense, more open areas in their search strip are already visible and it can be clearly seen that the misper is not there.