[for two players, or perhaps more]

setup

Each player needs an instrumental setup capable of producing and repeating a wide range of distinct sounds (at least 10 each, but preferably more).
The setup could comprise a single source or a range of different sources, and these may be electronic (including samples) or acoustic, or both.
Each player's sounds should be prepared in advance and organised so that they can be easily recalled (e.g. using notation, or a visual layout)
Each sound should be short and generally have a single attack (i.e. no composite gestures).

Players also each need to generate a set of words. The number of words for each player should be the same as the number of sounds for that player.
The words could be from a single category (e.g. birds, or prepositions) or from many different categories.
Each player's list of words should be prepared in advance and be visible to the player.
Each word should be short, generally no more than three syllables in length.

As far as possible, the instrumental sounds and words chosen by one player should not be known by the other player prior to the performance.
For rehearsals, aim to use a different set of instrumental sounds and words where this is practicable. Try not to learn associations during rehearsals and repeat them in the performance.

The performance space is set up with players facing each other.

performance

During the performance, players aim to pair instrumental sounds with words, so that each instrumental sound eventually has a fixed correlated word.
The performance constitutes the learning process and deployment of these sound-word pairings.
The players should work co-operatively and try to help each other learn the sound-word pairings.

To achieve this, the players may complete one of four pairs of actions:

> player 1 makes an instrumental sound, then player 2 speaks a word
> player 2 makes an instrumental sound, then player 1 speaks a word
> player 1 speaks a word, then player 2 makes an instrumental sound
> player 2 speaks a word, then player 1 makes an instrumental sound

Players aim to replicate each pairing after its first instance so that they become established as composite units.
The actions may occur in any sequence, but the focus should be on learning stable pairs and helping the other player do the same.
Players only use their own instrumental sounds and words.

The piece is complete when the players are confident that they have all learnt and can reliably replicate all sound-word pairings.
If this process can be completed very easily, use a larger number of sounds and words to make it more challenging.
While the process is co-operative, players may be demanding in the way they test the other player to ensure the pairings are firmly established.

If more than two players are involved, the pairings form a circle: player 1's sounds are named by player 2, player 2's sounds are named by player 3 … player *n*'s sounds are named by player 1.