

Title: Moving and Learning Together: Using cooperative activities to enhance student engagement, creativity and strategy

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Want to promote students thinking creatively and strategically? Want to help your students get more comfortable working with others? Want to encourage all students to be an active part of a team? This session will include practical ideas for partner, small and large group cooperative activities. The ideas from this session have been used at the start of the school year, on outdoor education field trips, in peer partner settings and more. We're better together so plan to join in this session.

Activity: Team Tower

Equipment: boxes of different sizes, cones, ropes, blindfolds, floor tape/poly spots, stopwatch (optional)

Objective: Be the team that has the tallest tower standing at the end of time limit

Formation: 4-5 teams of 4-6, in relay form, same distance from center

Procedure: Safety considerations given first: keep your teammates safe, including the speed walked. Use their name and, "Stop!" as needed. Tower has to be built behind your line (cone). Only the person with the blindfold may touch the tower. Be honest, if you can see through the blindfold, close your eyes. Together build the tallest tower you can. Teams are in file form behind their marked line. One person has the blindfold on and is directed to the center to pick up an item. Someone from their team guides with voice only to get the teammate to the center, pick up an item, get back to team area and put the item down.

Discussion ideas: At the end have groups rate their tower (1-5- 5 being high), teamwork, listening, giving directions? Have students close their eyes and ask which role they preferred: giving the directions or following the directions? How does trust come into play? Just because people get louder does that mean they are the best ones to listen to? Did you ever have many people talking to you at the same time? Is it hard to know who to listen to?

Activity: Robot Writer (see Gopher Sport)

Equipment: Object Retrieval System pack or modify for your own, large pieces of paper, markers, tape

Objective: As a team of 6-15, be able to write a 3 or 4 letter word that can be read, draw a shape, etc.

Formation: Students spread out and hold onto the end of the straps only with the paper taped to the floor underneath

Procedure: Working together the team moves the marker to draw the designated word or shape. Can have the group decide what to write or draw within teacher directions. "Decide on a word together, what word would you use to describe yourselves?"

Activity: Hazardous Waste : (see Gopher Sport)

Equipment: Object Retrieval System pack or modify for your own, buckets, bucket lids with ropes/long handles attached

Objective: As a team using the provided equipment, be able to move something (ex. bird eggs) from the toxic area to the safe area

Formation: In a small group of 6-8, teams move items from inside the roped off area to another area using only the straps while staying outside to the roped area

Activity: Together Towel Challenges (these activities could also be used with small parachutes)

Equipment: bath towels, choice: tennis balls, beanbags, Koosh balls, water balloons, etc. 1 towel and one item for every 2-4 people

Objective: Holding onto the corners of the towel be able to accomplish variety of challenges/tasks

Formation: 2-4 people per towel, spread out in playing area, one tossing item per towel

Procedure: Working together, without letting go of the towel unless for safety reasons, teams attempt to accomplish tasks such as:

- toss and catch your ball, count consecutive catches
- toss, let ball bounce, catch
- toss as close to the ceiling (as high as possible)
- toss as far in one direction as possible (could have teams lined up on one side of the play area and go for distance)
- toss to a target (basketball hoop, over volleyball net, into a hoop on floor, etc.)
- play catch with another team, consecutive tosses
- see how far apart you and another team can get playing catch (Catching one-step)

Activity: Tinikling with Jump Bands or Hula Hoops

Equipment: Set of 1 jump bands per group, 4 hula hoops per group, start with 2 hoops

Objective: Using rhythm and footwork, complete various tinikling patterns inside the moving jump bands or hula hoops

Formation: one person on each end, both feet together inside jump band or each holding onto the hula hoop with one person starting on one side

Procedure: practice the rhythm first with no equipment, often is an “out, out, in, in” pattern with the jumpers feet being apart on the “out” and both feet together on the “in”. All practice the basic jumping pattern.

In between two lines, practice patterns for those inside the jump bands or hoops:

1. two jumps one side, two jumps in the middle, two jumps on the other side
“out, out, middle, middle, out, out, middle, middle, out, out”
2. two jumps on one side, two steps in the middle, two jumps on the outside, two steps in the middle
“out, out, step, step, out, out, step, step, out, out” or use Rights and lefts, “jump, jump, Right, Left, jump, jump, Left, Right, jump, jump,” etc.
3. feet straddling the lines jump twice and then jump twice with feet together inside, “out, out, in, in, out, out, in, in, out, out”
4. using all stepping, with right foot next to the line, “Right, Left, Right, Left, Right, Left” when going to the right start with right foot, when going to the left, start with the left.
5. students create movement rhythms with turns.

Once students have a sense of the rhythm, add the jumping bands or the hoops. Add a second or third jumper when ready. Then as students get comfortable you can have the groups set up in a set of four, like a plus sign and have jumpers go around the circle of bands. You can also have all the bands in a line and students travel down the line, singly or with a partner.

With two hoops: two students each have a hoop and are sitting across from each other with hands on one side of the hoop. On “out” the hoop is close to the body, no intersection of hoops in the middle. On “in” the hoops intersect with enough space for the jumpers two feet.

For an advance activity, add two additional hoops, perpendicular to the first two.

Activity: Castle Ball- see separate directions with photo

Equipment: 4 sets of 6 same sized hula hoops, 2 or 4 colors of jerseys, 4 poly spots or cones per castle, 2-4 soft foam soccer balls

Objective: Working as a team, knock down other team's castles while keeping yours up and safe

Formation: Can be modified to use 4 teams, each with its own color jersey and castle to defend. Teams can be combined.

With the way our gym is set up and using the lines on the floor, the area inside the basketball lane works well as the crease.

Activity: Partner warm ups/fitness challenges

Equipment: 1 beanbag per partnership, one short rope per partnership, one set of juggling scarves (or as students progress one set of juggling balls) per partnership

Options: **Partner jumping jacks-** partners face each other with jumping jack legs while clapping right hands, then left hands; another one is two regular jumping jacks and then a right hand then left hand clap, two regular jumping jacks; could clap both hands as well; variations up to the creativity of students

Energizing Toe Tapping brain break- partners face each other, tap right feet together, tap left feet together, tap right feet two times in a row, tap left feet, tap right feet, tap left feet two times in a row. Cues: "Right, left, right, right, left, right, left, left, right, left, right, right,.."

Variation: partners face away from each other and tap toes

Partner clap push ups- partners are in push up position facing each other (this does work with modified from knees position or just on hands and knees). Partners do a regular push up, do a push up and clap right hands, do a regular push up, do a push up and clap left hands. They could just be in push up position and alternate hands to clap. It seems to work better to do separate push ups in between the claps. Variation is to lift a leg instead of clap hands or in addition to clapping hands. Students think creativity for more ideas.

Push up hockey: one beanbag per partnership. Students face partner with one having a beanbag to try to slide through partners hands or hands and feet to get a point. Beanbag must be slid. Partner tries to stop the beanbag with a hand and then slide it back. Can be played in rounds with one side of partners trying to get points against the other side. If someone breaks the push up position the other person automatically wins. Can add points scored (this side scored 10 goals and this side scored 8) or round winners (this side had 5 victories and that side had 8) Can rotate players and see who comes up with the most wins. This scoring concept can also be used with full body rock, paper, scissors, run.

Partner clap curl ups- variation 1: one partner has back on mat, with partner standing while holding feet. Standing partner puts out hands, relaxed at sides. When person does a curl up he/she reaches up and claps right hands with partner, goes back down to the mat, does another curl up and claps left hands, etc. Can be done with clapping both hands each time or a left and right each time.

-variation 2: partners both on the mat with feet touching. One person's R foot is on top and has a left foot under partner's. Each do a curl up and clap hands, can cross body or not.

Partner juggling-variation 1: partners face each other with a total of 3 juggling items. Working together (as one set of hands) they attempt column style of juggling.

-variation 2: partners face each other about an arm's length apart and juggle 3 items together. For example, one person starts with an item in each hand and the partner has one item. They toss back and forth with 2 items and then 1. The items can go around the rectangle made by the hands. Try each direction, clockwise and counterclockwise.

-variation 3: partners stand next to each other facing the same way. One person only uses the left hand and the other only uses the right hand. Attempt to juggle all three ways.

-variation 4: partners stand next to each other facing each other, a left shoulder even with the partner's right. Make sure to have lots of space on each side of each person and between groups! Each person has one item to toss. On "go" one person tosses their item up on the side away from the partner, the other person tosses his/hers up and they each go catch the other's item. They end up going back and forth sideways. They see how far apart they can go and still catch the items. This can also be done individually.

Activity: Two jumpers in one or two short jump ropes

Equipment: One or two ropes (suggested 9 feet for middle school students) per partnership

Objective: Have students use problem solving, creativity, communication and rhythm skills to demonstrate one or two rope partner skills

Formation: partners can face each other in one rope, one person in front of another in one or two ropes, stand side by side in one rope or two

Procedure: Challenge students to come up with as many different ways as they

Activity: Long jump rope: Add-a-person

Equipment: One super long rope or two long ropes attached at the handles per group

Objective: Get as many students jumping inside the rope together as possible, 10 consecutive jumps is the requirement

Formation: Find or mark a spot on the floor that marks the center and guides students.

Procedure: Groups of students (at least 8) are challenged to get as many people working and jumping together in the middle of the rope as possible. Combine groups and continue the challenge. Could be used as a whole class challenge.

Discussion ideas: What (strategies) did students feel made the difference in a successful group? Was it getting a rhythm all could do, was it trying again after a mistake, was it that your skills were used best?

Activity: Long jump rope: Egg Beater

Equipment: Two similar sized long ropes, turning perpendicular to each other

Objective: Enter the turning ropes, jump, exit: singly or in partners

Procedure: Place two equal sized ropes perpendicular to each other on the floor. Use floor lines to help. Have four rope turners equidistant from the marked center. Have the ropes turn

Formation: Find or mark a spot on the floor that marks the center.

Discussion ideas: Did you tie your shoes successfully the first time? What else took some practice but once you got it figured out it became easy? Life lesson: sometimes your eyes tell you that something seems so difficult, sometimes too difficult, but if you step back and take a little time to think it through it is achievable with the right approach

Activity: Castle Ball- see next page

