

Cooperatives Challenges Adventure and Teambuilding



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Introduction

Welcome to *Cooperative Challenges!* I must admit, I am passionate on this subject. I should let the reader know, that cooperative learning is a subject and concept I've studied for my entire PE career. It's a bit of hobby.

Before getting starting in the activities, I think a purpose/goal is in order. The purpose/goal and structure of cooperative challenges and games is often different than competitive games. We are going for more social, the affective domain and being more inclusive, the idea of not being left out, being left in. Working on developing a feeling of community and a sense of belonging in groups or teams. There is art form to teaching cooperatives, a delicacy to it. And I've always felt, the better our cooperative learning program will go a long way to being a part of our discipline program as well. The better we get our students cooperate, it develops skills like respect, accountability, responsibility and many others.

Also as we delve into the unit, it's a little odd, but if we think about it, we are trying to "challenge" the students. Another way to think about it, is to **frustrate** them. No one uses that word, but that's what we are doing in an artistic way. We challenge them, have them involved in risk taking, frustrate them and their job is to cooperatively problem solve the puzzle-and kids adore this system. However, we just have to understand the exact formula to turn frustration and failure into fun.

I would like to take a moment and acknowledge some of the PE authors I've studied and learned a great deal from: Donald Glover, Daniel Midura, Leigh Ann Anderson, Terry Orlick, Steve Grineski and others. Make no mistake, their writing, books and conversations have changed my thinking and career. Some of their material below is ubiquitously present, and I thank them.

As Terry Orlick states, *"These games are designed to teach children the value of cooperation, teamwork and joyful integration while they promote positive human integration and nurture respectful human values."* (*Cooperative Games and Sports*, 2006)

I also learned and used this every day. **LPE**: Have students learn to **listen** to each other, **praise** them for their ideas, and **encourage** them for their ideas and efforts. They can be developed at young ages from like K level and above. (*Team Building Through Physical Challenges*, Glover/Midura, 1992)

I made a mini card of this concept, **LPE: Listen Praise and Encourage**. I carry this card in my back pocket at all times while teaching. I also have a wall poster of this next to my outcome board. This is a main part and concept of my program and we practice these skills with drills and activities. Every child knows what **LPE** means, but more than that, we put it in practice every day. We actively **listen** to each other, we practice **praising** others, and **encouraging** others, and we NEVER EVER use put downs. It is banned in my gym. We can question ideas but not put down people.

However, the test comes when we are challenged, and frustrated with our amazing challenges team building activities. Can students still use LPE and be positive? It's simple to get along when things are rosy and easy, but when we stress them out, which we do in this unit, we are really teaching the physical, thinking, emotional, and the relational life skills.

Let's test them. I collected a list of a just a few selected activities and games. They span the spectrum from key simple social ice breakers to challenging activities and all the way to some adventure/teambuilding games, some which the PE world has yet to see before. Maybe you are able to fit few into your program over the next couple years.

Links to activities:

- [Name Games/ Getting to Know You](#)
- [Back to Back](#)
- [Huddles](#)
- [Matching](#)
- [Towel Toss](#)
- [Animal Transfer to the Vet](#)
- [Leaking Life Boat](#)
- [Ship Wreak 1](#)
- [Ship Wreak 2](#)
- [Cooperative Stations](#)
- [Create a Cooperative Challenge](#)
- [Team Building Through Physical Challenges](#)



Name Games/Getting to Know You:

The more we do of these short simple social skills introductory style games, the better. There are lots of games like these, I only included a few. They foster those key relational student to student and teacher to student interactions in fun and engaging ways. (Keeping the Orlick and Glover/Midura quotes and system in mind.)

Start your school year with them in fun positive ways and revisit these from time to time. All of us have a tendency to forget them, and focus on competition and sport skills. The better our relational skills and the better our overall discipline will be, there are no short cuts; it starts with the affective domain and very good positive relationships.

- **Name Games:**
Form a circle-standing starting position.
 - Leader calls out his/her name and rhymes it *"I'm Billy and I'm silly!"*
 - *Next person does the same thing after the kids stop laughing at Billy's funny rhyme! "He's Billy, and silly, I'm Larry, and hairy!" Each next player repeats the previous student's name and rhyme. Then add her/his.*
- **Favorite hobby, video game, TV show, movie, food, vacation,** etc. Builds upon getting to know your students. Name hobbies and interests.
- **Sports Pantomime Game:** (3-5) modify for more physical for older students. Have each player choose a **sport** or **physical activity** and then demo's it. *"I'm Ericka and I like jump rope!"* Ericka shows her **jump rope skills** then the entire class also jumps rope with her. *"I'm Bobby, I like biking!"* Lays on back and twirls legs. This is more physical, active, creative and super fun!
- As you can see, there's lots of ways to do these. We just have to be proactive. Take a few minutes per class from time to time. (Winter/Spring breaks) Build on good social skills/community/relationships and notice the difference.

Back To Back: (K-2 grades) (Tom Taylor/Sarratt)



Introduction:

I first learned of this game, from my student teaching experience, from Tom Taylor. I quite sure I've taught this little game to more PE teachers and classroom teachers than other game. I've adapted it to make it completely cooperative and inclusive, not competitive, exclusive, the way I learned it. It's now a very simple and fun ice breaker for younger students. Let's see how it goes.

- **Character Education Lesson:** caring and kindness.
- **Leadership Lesson:** inclusive and taking initiative.
- **Goal:** Can each player cooperate while finding a new **Back to Back** partner without repeating the partner? Find a new partner each round?

Why are we playing Back to Back?

- ✓ To practice getting along with our classmates
- ✓ To find as many new partners as we can during the game time
- ✓ To practice being honest about finding new partners, it is fun!

Equipment: tambourine (optional)

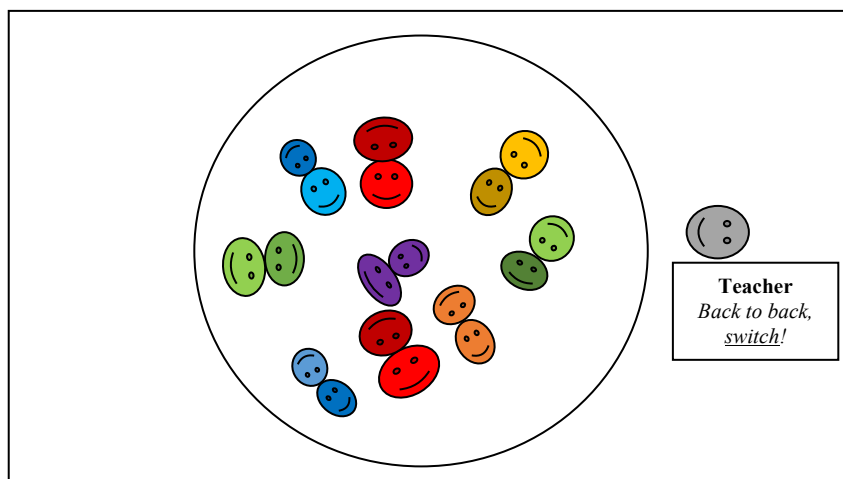
Organization: (see diagram below)

- Whole class, in center area of gym, play area.

How we play Back to Back:

Each student starts in a small area like a center circle, standing in scatter position. When the teacher calls out "*back to back*" and shakes the tambourine (or claps twice) the players scurry to find his or her first back to back partner and stands back to back with this partner. They did it! (Teacher plays if odd number) Each round, the goal is to find a new, and different partner. So, it's a bit of a memory test, luck, chance and puzzle-problem solving mini game. Short, fast, fun, little mini game.

Students: playing back to back



Rules:

1. No running.
2. Stay in play area (circle, square, etc.)
3. Don't lock arms, just stand back to back.
4. Do you have a new partner each round? Did you look for one?
5. Including everyone?
6. Odd number: extra student, without a partner, the teacher plays.

Variations:

- **Popcorn Adventure:** (K level only) (Sarratt)
- Pretend the students are in big bowl of popcorn! Slowly turn up the heat... (turn the knob, make a sound) They start popping/jumping... pop, pop, pop... turn the heat off, they get with a buddy, back to back, two pieces of popcorn stuck together!
- **Ingredients:** Now, the fun starts by adding ingredients to your big bowl of popcorn. (each round) Yep, on top of the kids of course! Be very dramatic! Each mini round add: butter, oil, salt, pepper, cheese and even Old Bay etc.
- To end the game, you turn your back, and all the little pieces of popcorn/kids sneak out of the bowl and don't get eaten by the big PE teacher.
- The K kids/popcorn win the game! Teacher doesn't get any popcorn...

Closure:

- How did the student do cooperating, sharing, taking turns in Back to Back?
- Next game, **Huddles** is one level more challenging, wonderful for our older students and preparing them for adventure activities and teambuilding!

Huddles (Grades 3-5)



Introduction:

I also don't recall exactly where I first learned of this game, possibly during my student teaching, or one of my early college experiences, but I know I taught this to a lot of PE teachers and many schools as well. It's cooperative and (mostly) inclusive. It's a simple ice breaker game to get cooperatives started, as mentioned, a wonderful prep activity for adventure games and teambuilding. Just what we need at times.

- **Character Education Lesson:** caring and kindness.
- **Leadership Lesson:** inclusive and taking initiative.
- **Goal:** For the entire class to work cooperatively following all the rules, and complete all the huddle challenges. If you do, you win!
- **Why are we playing this game?** "To practice getting along!"
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Equipment: tambourine

Organization: (see diagram below)

Whole class, in center area of gym, play area.

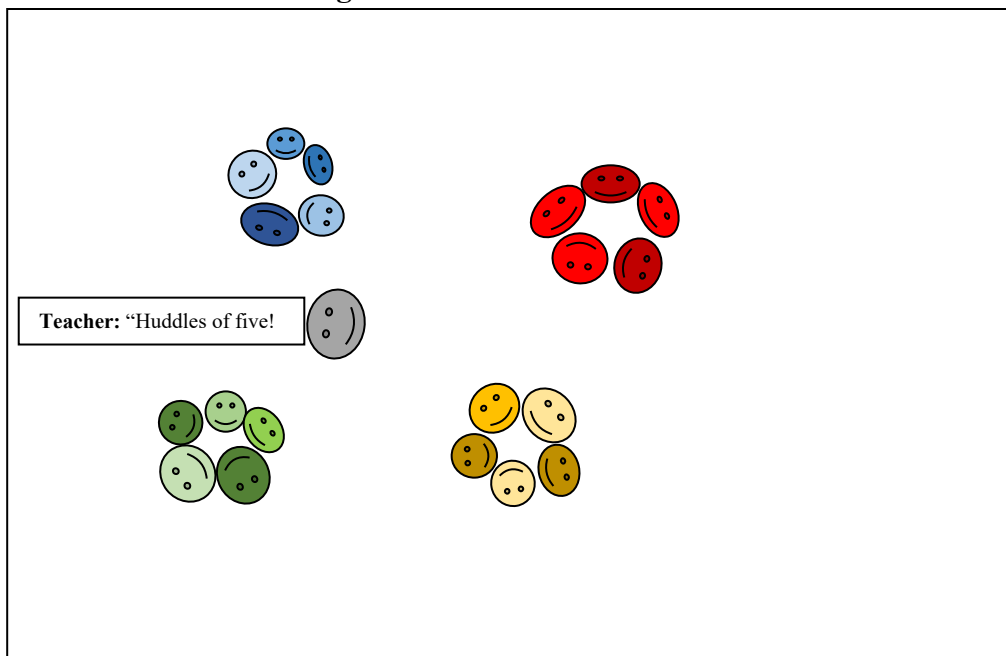
How we play Huddles: (see rules and procedure below)

Have the class come in and sit in the center circle area for a quick demo. Teacher asks the class if they know what a huddle is. Are they on the same team? Working together? Teacher calls out a several students to demo how to create a small huddle and how and to place arms and hands safely on shoulders. Demo. Huddles of 1! Huddles of 2! Huddles of 3! Huddle of 4! Huddles of 2! Huddles of 1! Teacher demos/models, walking out and allowing the kids to make the huddles. Teacher demos being the Hero.

Does the class get it? In this game there may be extra players not in a huddle for a couple seconds, the teacher can fill in, or a student or two can volunteer to be “heroes.” This is part of the numbers game. The class is trying to win the game, against the game!

Do they get it! Each round, the goal is for the class to solve the huddle number challenge / numbers/patterns. So, it’s a bit of a puzzle-problem solving social challenge.

Diagram of Huddles Game



Rules:

- Goal is for the class to be able to complete each and every round, and win the huddles challenges, and win the huddles game!
- Make the proper number challenge: any student(s) remaining is class Hero/Helper for that round. Thank you!
- Hands on shoulders. Respectful, kind touching only.
- No kicking feet or falling down/wild play.
- Include anyone into your group that wants to join.
- **LPE**: listen, praise, and encourage/help each other.

Procedure - suggestion of calls

- Call out 1's, students huddle by themselves.
- 2's, they find a buddy.
- 3's, groups of three.
- 4's, groups of four.
- 2's again!
- 1's again.
- 5's, groups of five! Things are getting tricky!
- Work your way up, depending on number in class.
- Last huddle is, one class huddle of all the students! They did it!

Variations:

- Create your own huddle challenge. There are several challenges I did not list, that I would have my classes perform each year.
- Contact me for additional huddle challenges if interested.

Closure:

- Talk to classes that games require: mental, physical and social/emotional skills to complete.

Matching: (Grades 2-4)



Shoulder to Shoulder



Right foot to right foot

This is another cooperative game, and again, I'm not sure where I came across it. It's super simple, yet super fun and exciting. We have to use our best judgement and creativity when making the matches.

Our goal is have partners pair up with a buddy. And using our "calls," the partners will **match-up**: "shoulder to shoulder," "elbow to elbow," "toe to toe," "heel to heel" "back to back" and "knee to knee." There are lots of ways to make it much more tricky and fun.

With practice, we get really good, our skills improve at the creative calls and challenges. I recommend writing down, or even typing a list, save it, and keep adding to it. Creativity is the key, you will get great at this! Go for it!

Towel Toss (K-5/Sarratt)

Introduction:

I invented this cooperative challenge decades ago using bath towels. It provides a simple to medium level of challenge to our students. They love the challenge to figure out how to do it. They get really good at it, once they learn it. Just what our goal is!

A little background; I got Walmart to donate 15+ yellow towels to my PE program and it also became part of my cooperative field day station. Later on, I introduced the idea to Sportime and they now sell the mini parachutes. Note: smaller bath towels are easier to control than the larger 33" X 50" partner chutes. Older students can manipulate these Sportime chutes with better control. Younger kids can't really handle those Sportime chutes too well. They need to stick with medium sized bath towels.

Why are we playing Towel Toss?

- ✓ To problem solve with a partner
- ✓ To find the best way to toss and catch working cooperatively

Equipment:

- Towels: medium size bath towels
- Mini parachutes/**Sportime.com** #9-1449450 (sets of 6)
- Bean bags (BB)
- Storage boxes for the towels and mini parachutes

Organization:

- Players form partnerships with a towel/mini parachute in between them and a bean bag next to them.
- Scatter position on play area

How we play:

On the start signal, the partners try to figure out how to toss and catch the bean bag. The art form is in giving as few directions and information as possible. (For younger students a few more hints may be needed.) Just setting up the structure and system and allowing for students exploratory learning and problem solve the solutions. Eventually they figure out to place the bean bag on top of the towel, and pop it up and catch it! And get good at it! Then add challenges of how many in a row, like 2, 3, 4 even 10 in row etc. Then higher!

Variation/progressions:

- Toss up, spinneroo, and catch: Pair toss-up BB, while in the air, switch position, (spinneroo/switcheroo) then catch the BB!
- Partners toss to partners: One pair tosses the BB to another pair!

Teaching Tips: Take some time, allowing the pairs to figure out how to play the game and challenges.

Animal Transfer to the Vet (K-2 and 3-5)

Introduction:

This is actually two separate cooperative games/structures but I use the same fun little story and equipment for both with the children, therefore, I'm combining them. Both provide a nice little progression toward a cooperative challenge and teambuilding.

Why are we playing this game?

- ✓ To transfer the sick animals carefully from person to person to the Veterinary hospital by using careful cooperative skills

Equipment:

2 Sets of 6 Hula Hoops

Molded PVC animals, sets of 6: Fish, frogs, pigs, roosters, chickens (Great Lakes Sports, Gopher, Sportime and others)

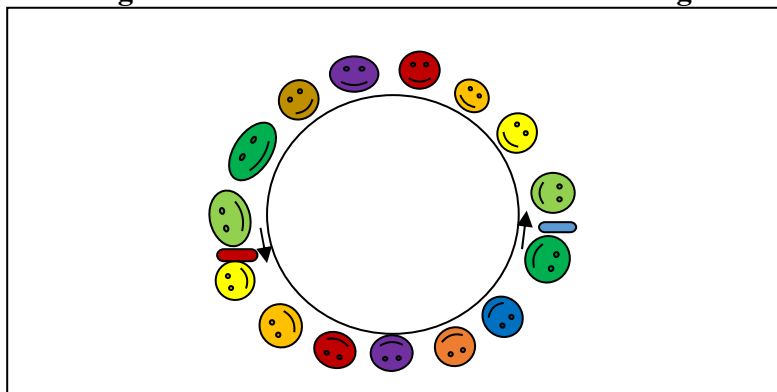
Organization: (see diagrams below)

- **Circle Challenges (K-2)**
- **In line with feet, six teams** Grades (3-5)

How we play Animal Transfer to the Vet:

I tell a fun little story with student's that the *"animals are sick/injured and need our help, and must be passed carefully from buddy to buddy and to Veterinary Hospital for medical care."* They are allergic to our hands, so we can't touch them.

Diagram Game 1: Animal Circle Transfer – grades K-2



Game 1: Grades K-2 (See diagram above)

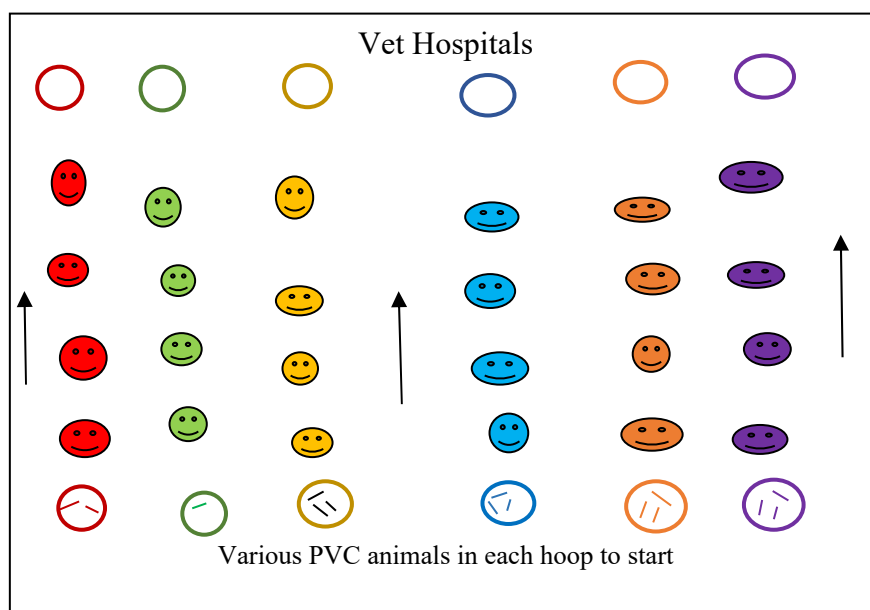
- Grades K-2 Teacher uses the various PVC animals to challenge students to pass the animals from buddy to buddy in a circle structure.
- We don't use our hands (dirty/germs).

- Standing, sitting, etc.
- Challenge them to use elbows, shins, knees, toes, etc. But without dropping the animals if possible.
- Use your judgement on how many items at times, what skill/tricks to play. How fast to go. What animal to use. It's all very cute. And they work hard on this challenge to complete it.

Variation:

- Reverse direction!
- Some animals going one way, others going the way!
- Facing backwards, outside the circle! Feet outwards!

Diagram Game 2: Animal Straight Line Transfer – grades 3-5



Game 2: Grades 3-5 (see diagram above)

I learned this version from watching a co-teacher perform this with his wonderful 5th graders a couple years ago. Thanks for sharing this Mr. Casey Farrell.

- Teacher uses the various PVC animals to challenge students to pass the animals from buddy to buddy. From one end down to far end, to Vet hospitals.
- Students lay on their backs, toes toward animals, heads towards Vet hospital.
- We don't use our hands (dirty/germs).
- Challenge them to use only their toes! But without dropping animals.
- First player in each line picks the first animal; up with their toes and lifts over body or can spin around and pass off to next players' toes.
- They repeat the process until all animals are in the last hoop, the Vet hospitals.

Variation:

- Switch/mix up the order.
- Go the other way.
- Switch up teams.
- Play the long way in the gym, make them stretch out and slide more, player to player, and for each item. This is a quite tiring game! Great abdominal work.

Teaching Tips:

- How well did your students play the game?
- Respect the animals? No hitting/slapping them.
- Are they ready for the next challenge? Ready to get *stranded* on an island!

Leaking Life Boat/Dinghy: (Grades 3-5)

Introduction:

Welcome to Leaking Life Boat/Dinghy! This game goes by several names as well and I've seen it played differently by various teachers. I include it here, since I break it down, gamify it into smaller steps and organize it for both the teacher and students. When it is organized like you see here, the students seem to benefit.

Also, this game and following few, use a similar story/theme of being ship wrecked and stranded on a beach and an attempt to escape and survive. Students find this and following games quite adventurous. It brings out natural humanistic teamwork. Personally, I wouldn't go a year without including at least one of these games in my **Cooperative/Challenge Adventure Unit**. They are so ingrained in my program.

Why are we playing this game?

- ✓ To practice being honest
- ✓ To practice being safe
- ✓ To share our jobs while we play: sharing is caring
- ✓ To follow the game rules and procedures
- ✓ To practice **LPE** with others.

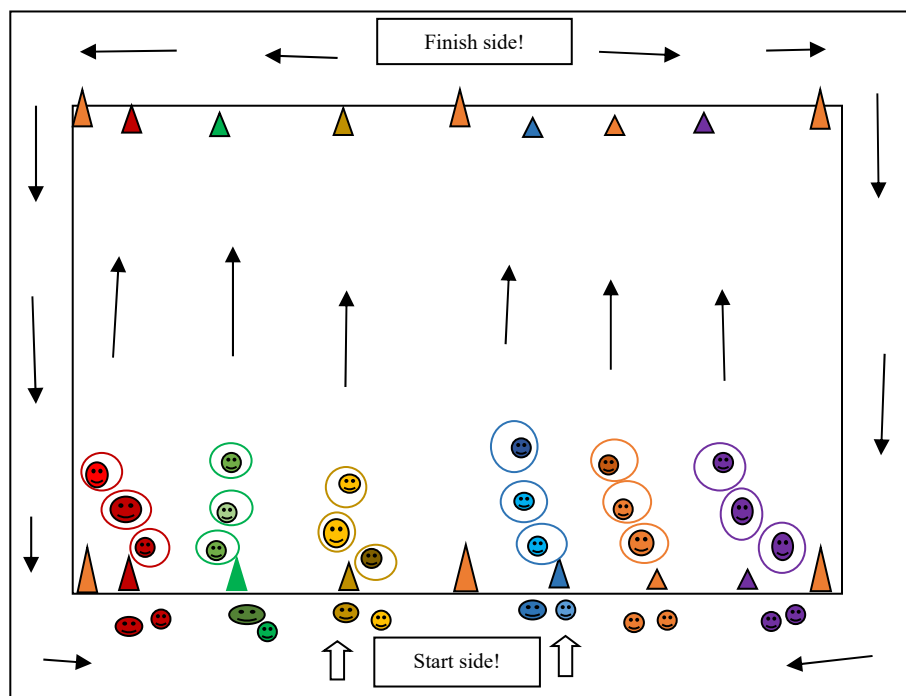
Equipment: (see diagram below)

Equipment is key to the success of this game.

- 3 Rainbow sets - traffic cones - medium size 18"
- 3 large 36" hula hoops, rainbow colors (3 each color)
- 2 medium 30" hula hoops, rainbow colors (2 each color)
- 2 smaller 24" hula hoops, rainbow colors (2 each color)
- 4-6 extra-large traffic cones
- Molded PVC animals, sets of 6: Fish, frogs, pigs, roosters, chickens (Great Lakes Sports, Gopher, Sportime and others)
- Wall posters/diagrams
- Large Wall Posters: **Start Side** and **Finish Side**

Organization:

Organization is also key to the success of this game. Kids can get confused if this game is not organized with a good story, set-up, and progression with the equipment.



Students starting the *Leaking Life Boat* game
Heading from the **starting side** to **finish side**



How we play Leaking Life Boat:

Rules:

- **Goal:** for the teams to make it across the ocean using *Leaking Life Boats/dinghies*. If a player steps out of a HH into the ocean, that is a mistake, and the entire team must go back and start again. This is called a mistake, learning and it is okay, part of the game. This happens all the time. Children learn to accept this with honor.

- Share jobs, passing the hula hoops/equipment.
- Be safe, no super long jumps.
- Each team starts on one side of the gym, **start side**, and plays only one direction towards the other end of the gym-**finish side**. It is a one direction course only. When they reach the end, they walk, not run, around to the sides and back, not through the course. It is like a big circle. This system works wonders. Keeps the teacher and students organized.
- When the team get back to their starting position, they call Mr./Ms. Gym! And teacher comes see them, and get their report. What challenge did they just complete, and what challenge do you want them to do next?
- You may want the learners to repeat the same challenge, refinement, or they may be ready for the next level challenge. This is all fluid.

Procedure/challenges:

- **One direction >>>**
- **Three large HH's:** Start with three large HH's
- **Gamify:** Two large HH
- **Gamify:** Two medium HH
- **Gamify:** Last challenge, try with two small HH's
- Note: It helps to have all the six teams of HH ready to go, on the start side, back wall. The medium and small ones ready to go. Use the 6 color system. (diagram) I use an extra cone and place all these HH's around this extra cone for each team, so they are ready to go. (Note: This is not diagramed)

Variation/progressions:

- Carry a few PVC molded animals as they go through the last few challenges, no throwing, passing only.
- Combine teams, to make slightly larger teams, making the challenge more difficult.

Teaching tips/notes:

- Sometimes I find, the most difficult part of this and similar cooperative challenges, is getting kids to share jobs, not trying to do everything themselves, and not racing through them. See ***Teambuilding Through Physical Challenges*** at the end of this section for more info.

Ship Wreck 1: (Sarratt) [Grades 4-5]



Introduction:

Welcome to a unique experience in PE. I made up this game to further the challenge and provide an additional adventure for my older students in 4th and 5th grade. I hope you enjoy it.

Story/theme:

"Once upon a time our class took a field trip to a distant island to discover how the children in different countries play games. We took a small ship through the tiny islands to visit a small town. While traveling we get caught in a hurricane and our ship is destroyed on a deserted beach. Stranded on the beach. The only items we have remaining are (6-8) large folded cardboard boxes (folded mats) to create rafts. (Two mats per team.) We quickly discover that we must get off this beach because it's volcanic and is about to blow its top! Also, there are sharks in the water so it's only safe for the kids to stand on the mats and not paddle with their hands and not kick with their feet.

Can you work cooperatively to make a raft and travel to another island?"

Why are we playing this game?

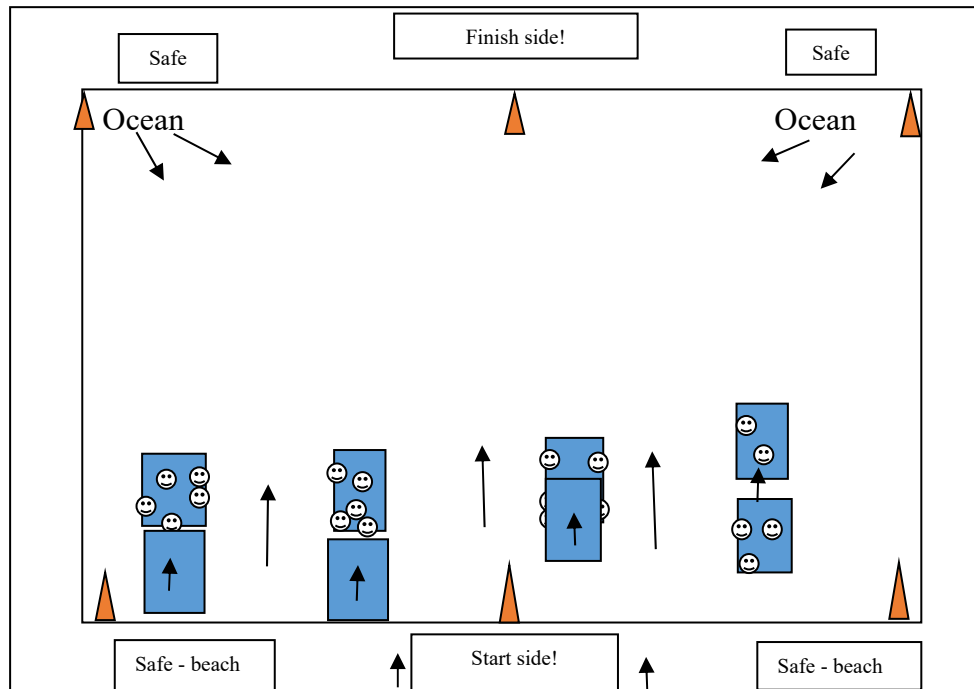
- ✓ To work cooperatively with teammates-complete the challenge
- ✓ To share jobs-sharing is caring
- ✓ To follow all game rules
- ✓ To work safely so no one gets hurt

Equipment:

- 6-8 medium sized mats (2 per team)
- Cones for boundary lines
- Sharks: Sportime set 6 #6 9-022959

Organization: (See diagram below)

- Set up the 6-8 mats together along the start side of the gym in sets of two. Three/four sets of two, depending on class size. Mats folded up.



Working their way across the ocean! Good going!

Rules:

- Share jobs and take turns-sharing is caring!
- Be safe at times. No super long jumps.
- Do not paddle with hands or feet, too many sharks in the water!
- Safe to stand on, build raft in No, No Land – the beach.
- If any player steps/falls off the cardboard/mat into the ocean/ main gym floor the whole goes back and starts again-that's okay! No worries! This happens.
- Respectful, positive encouraging communication. **LPE**. Listen, praise, encourage each other.
- If a team makes it to the other beach, call your teacher. *"Ms./Mr. Gym! We made it!"* Wait for your next challenge from your teacher.
- Class wins, if all the teams make it across! Great going!
- When game is complete, fold up/set-up mats, start side, for next class.

How we play Ship Wreck 1:

Procedure

- Place the tumbling mats folded-up, in sets of two, along the wall, on the start side of the gym. The amount of mats/players per team depends on factors like class size, grade and mat sizes you have. A good general number is 5-6 players per team.
- On, the start signal, each team is standing on the beach, start side of the gym, with the two mats/cardboard. They start the game there. It's safe to stand on the beach, No, No land, on either side of the gym, but not in main gym floor/ocean.
- The students quickly realize as they play, that they can't get across with the mats folded-up. Just not enough space on folded up mat. This is how all teams try it at first. No feet and hands in the freezing water/sharks. I also tell them, there is a storm and big waves.
- **A solution:** They figure out to unfold the mats and they can stand on one mat at a time. The other mat is open also, and can be slid to one side or the other, and then they all jump on the other mat! Taking turns working their way across the ocean. Slide to side, jump on it, repeat, etc. They make across this way and win! Great going!
- **Better solution:** And a faster and a more fun one, is to lift the back mat, and hold it, carry it above their heads and flop down in front of the front; the mat they are standing on. This is like a big cooperating conveyor belt system! Are you kidding me! The kids love it! From the front mat, lift the front edge of the back mat, lift over top, flip it over, flop it down, all jump on it, and do it again! Over and over. Wow! We got this! We made it! Can we do this again please! Go back to the other side!

Variation:

- Combine teams to make it a tad a more challenging.

Teaching Tips:

- Remind students each trip to share jobs. Be careful!
- When they flop the mat down, make sure it doesn't go flying away too far.

Closure/assessment/reflection:

- What did this activity do to help your students learn about problem solving? Teamwork?
- Were the students able to communicate, be respectful, get along, even if is a tad bit frustrated during the beginning of the challenge? (That's what the goal is, what challenges bring out.)
- Are they ready to get Ship Wrecked again? A second time?
- Ship Wrecked 2 is next!

Ship Wreck 2: (Sarratt / Grades 4-5)



Introduction

Welcome to Ship Wreck 2. I made up this game years ago to further challenge my older students to cooperate and to handle a more difficult physical and mental puzzle. We've played it now for decades and it's been one of the student's favorite adventures games. I'm excited to share it with you.

Story/Theme:

"Once upon a time our class took a field trip to a distant island to discover how the children in different countries play games. We took a small ship through the tiny islands to visit a small town. While traveling we get caught in a hurricane and our ship is wrecked on a deserted island. The only items we have remaining are 4/5 large cardboard boxes (tumbling mats) and (20/25 scooters) 20-25 seat cushions/floats (5) per mat to create rafts.

We quickly discover that we must get off this island because it's volcanic and is about to blow its top! Also, there are sharks in the water so it's only safe to paddle with your hands and not kick with your feet. It's safer to paddle with hands because you can see the approaching sharks and can quickly pull your hands out of the water before being bitten by the hungry sharks. Yikes!"

The question is; "Can you work cooperatively by making a raft and paddling to another island?"

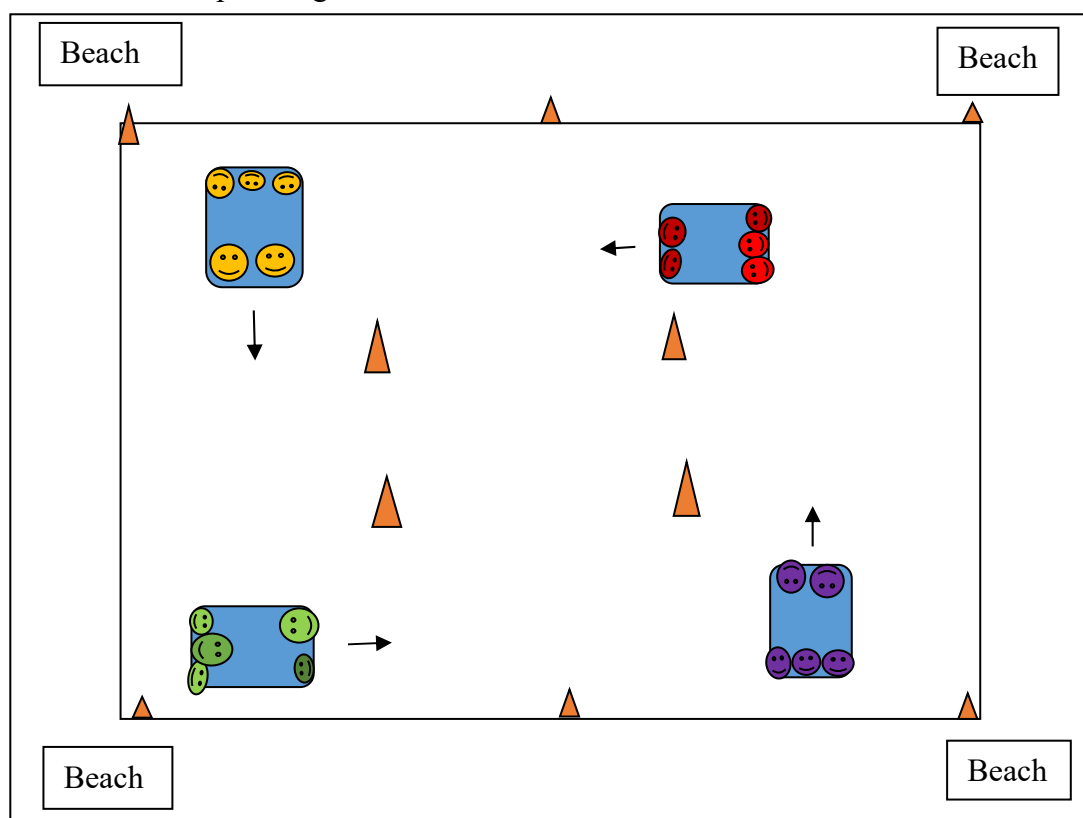
Why are we playing Ship Wreck 2?

- ✓ To work cooperatively with teammates-complete the challenge
- ✓ To share jobs-sharing is caring
- ✓ To follow all game rules
- ✓ To work safely so no one gets hurt

Equipment: (See diagram below)

- Set-up team equipment in four corners-start/stop area
- 4-5 medium sized folded up tumbling mats
- 5 scooters sitting on top per mat-upside down
- Set of sharks
- Gamify with 4 toilet plungers and small balls
- PFD's, youth size, four orange, cut all straps and buckles
- Four large cones placed in four corners of the play area.
- Molded PVC animals, sets of 6: Fish, frogs, pigs, roosters, chickens (Great Lakes Sports, Gopher, Sportime and others)

Organization: teams paddling around the ocean



Teams are doing a great job making their rafts, sharing body positions, and paddling around the ocean using just hands.
Note: three in the back as the pushers, two in the front as the drivers. Well done!

Rules:

- Build and work on your raft in No No land, the beach area.
- No standing on a scooter or the raft.
- No running and jumping on the scooters.
- Any student whose feet or body touches the water has been bitten by the shark and the entire group loses, start over, starting point. Feet are not allowed to hang over the edge of mats either, sharks will see them and jump out of the water and bite them off. Ouch! (Hands are okay to be in the water)
- After a mini-game and when returning the raft back to the start/stop point, the learners will roll the raft slowly and safely - not fast and uncontrolled.
- If a group completes a lap, around outside of big tall cones/channel markers and return to starting point, they win! Call Ms./Mr. Gym over. Next challenge.
- If all teams complete task the entire class is a winners! Next challenge!

How we play the game-Ship Wreck 2:

Goal: make a raft with the equipment and paddle all the way around the ocean and 4 big cones back to your starting position and call for Ms./Mr. Gym.

Procedure:

- Set up the mats and scooters according to the diagram, adjust the placements as necessary.
- Note: If the mats are fully closed, folded-up the student spend the entire time trying to make a super small raft to ride. More like a canoe. It doesn't work.
 - Therefore, over the years, I've changed the starting method; the mats need to be mostly open and scooters upside down on top of the mats to start the game.
- Set four large traffic cones to act as **channel markers**; leave enough room for clearance from the beach to the markers/cones.
- Five scooters per mat is required to create a quality raft. Four scooters is not enough and six or seven make the raft roll too easily. Five has proven perfect.
- For large classes and larger kids (grades 5) more mats/scooter stations will be needed. I have used up to six stations: mats/scooters with large 5th grade class.
- **Story time.** Read story and explain safety rules trying not to give away too many hints.
- **Groups.** Divide kids into groups that make fairly equal teams. It has not been a problem having one extra player per team.
- **Three part problem.** Each group is, first, to think of a solution and, secondly, communicate the solution (how to make the raft) to the group, thirdly, to try to physically complete the task honestly and safely.
- Like in most of these games, there is a bit of trial and error. So it is okay for the group to rebuild/retry the raft on any part of a beach where the raft is located. They don't have to go back to their starting position to fix it, if needed. That's a big deal.
- **Give it a go.** After the groups have been given a brief time to discuss the problem and solution, they are ready to give it a go. On teacher's signal, the students attempt to build the raft and roll it but will fail due to lack of experience and a bit of frustration may set in. Some kids will just try to ride the scooters. Or, the students will quickly and aimlessly just slide the scooters under very poorly folded or a way too open mat. And, the raft will not be able to get too far, due to the mat dragging on the floor, as they try to paddle it. This happens all the time.
- **Stop and think.** Students stop, think pair and share ideas with group members to solve this problem. Some groups will discover the better idea that it is best to fold the mats to make a slightly smaller and firmer raft, and they must work together to paddle the raft. Also, the key is that the four scooters must be placed toward the corners and the fifth scooter in the center. Also where they place their bodies matters. PE turns into a **STEM** project.
- **Keep rolling!** After the refinement period, the student are ready to roll again. Groups can fail again or barely succeed due to the mats, scooters and kid's placements and positions. But they are making progress and moving now.
- **Nope, don't give up!** Groups keep trying and refining for a better raft and better player's position to paddle faster. They start doing much better and having a blast! (You will need to cover your ears.) It's good idea to suggest switching roles. Pushers and drivers, etc.
- **Timed and all the students win.** The teacher will begin a 10 second count down, but knowing the last group will just barely make it! All groups win and survive the Shipwreck! Well done!
- **Clean-up:** Set up for the next class. It's their turn for an adventurous PE class!

Variation/progression: For additional mini games/classes.

- Add toilet plungers and yellow smaller yellow balls (gold nuggets). Center person holds the toilet plunger up high with the gold nugget in there. Also wears PFD. (See Sinking Ship, next game)
- Each team brings food with them on their trip, some of the molded PVC animals. Of stuffed animals. Endangers/need help. Don't drop in the ocean...
- Two teams go in one direction, two teams go in the other direction. Traffic jam!

Teaching Tip:

- Give it a try! Let me know how it goes...

Sinking Ship

(Sarratt/grades 3-5)

Introduction:

Welcome to Sinking Ship! I also made up this game years ago while at the movies watching the stunning movie, *Titanic* at the theater. I've taught this game to many schools and children since. My goal is like the above games to further challenge my older students to cooperate and able to handle a more difficult physical and mental puzzle. I also wanted to add a bit of adventure and excitement to the PE program. I hope Sinking Ship does that. We've played it now for decades, and it's been one of the student's favorite adventures and provided memories. I'm excited to share it with you.



Story/Theme:

“Once upon a time our class took a field trip to Alaska to discover how the children play games in the cold climate. We took a ship through the tiny islands to visit a small town. While traveling the ship hits an iceberg and started to take on water. A lot of water! Our ship is sinking! The water is freezing cold and we only have four floats and eight lines to use for all of us to get off the sinking ship and onto the four islands. Also there are sharks in the water, so it is only safe for the first four people to paddle to shore. After that, the sharks will appear, and the remaining kids have to get to shore without touching the water or the sharks will bit us! By the way, your teacher and guide, fell off the back of the ship when the ship hit the iceberg? You are all alone...

What do you do?

The ship is sinking!”

Why are we playing Sinking Ship?

- ✓ To work cooperatively with teammates-complete the challenge
- ✓ To share jobs-sharing is caring
- ✓ To follow all game rules
- ✓ To develop trust and responsibility by doing your job in a cooperative game
- ✓ To work safely so no one gets hurt

Equipment and Facility

- Two large tumbling mats attached together as the sinking ship
- Four mats folded in half in the corners of the sinking ship-islands
- **8 ropes:** You can get good rope and cheap at Home Depot. **This is the key to the game. 8 ropes perfectly measured to reach the islands. Cut all 8 ropes the same lengths and place a plastic snap shackles on end. 12-15 feet in length or so depending on size of your gym. Tape the ends of the ropes/snap shackles with electrical tape so they don't come untied.



Sinking Ship

Please note the extra scooter/ropes/island set-up in the middle

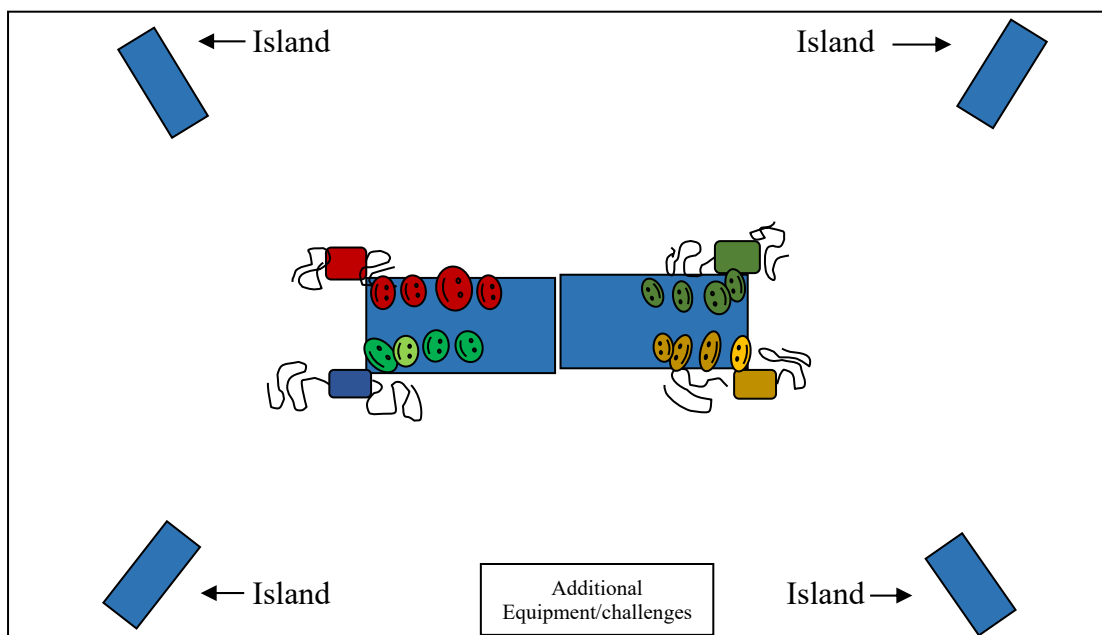
8/10 ropes ready to go!



Snap shackles attached

- Four larger size scooters, not small ones
- Four balls (water jugs) - smaller size
- Four toilet plungers (new)
- Four PFD's orange youth size (cut off all the strapping, belts, etc.)
- Four stuffed animals or molded PVC animals

Organization: Set-up position-starting the game



How we play Sinking Ship:

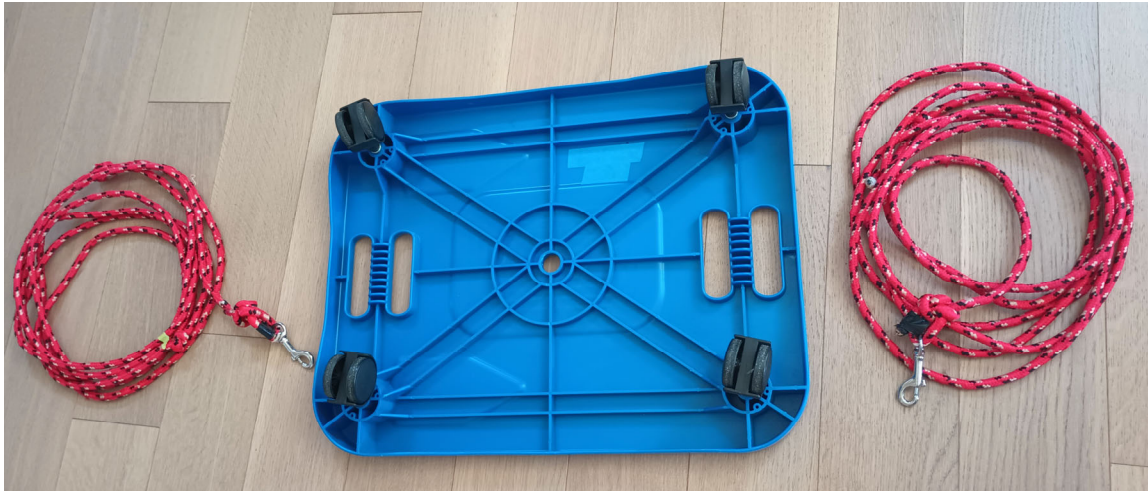
Rules:

- No standing on the scooter.
- No running and jumping on the scooters.
- No pushing off the mat to coast to the island. (This will cause the ship to sink)
- Only the first scooter rider at each corner may paddle with her/his hands, to the island, after that, no one may touch the water/floor. (Hands/feet)
- Any student who falls into the water the entire class loses, and must start over. This happens all the time.
- All students saved, the entire class is a winner. (If under the time limit)
- After several attempts, the kids should learn to take turns/sharing jobs, and perform all duties. Hold trailing/pulling line on ship> ride scooter to island> hold trailing/pulling line on the island> stand clear and out of the way of others/space. Share jobs.

Procedure:

- Set up the mats according to the diagram. Two mats will be needed for the center ship for a large class. Adjust the placements as necessary.
- Four scooters (with handles) on the center mat (ship). Place in corners.
- Eight ropes with a snap shackle on each rope should rest next to the scooters, two ropes in each corner. The length of the rope is important. The length of both ropes needs to be just long enough to extend from the corner / edge of the ship to the edge of the island. Keep in mind the scooter will add about 18-30 inches to this distance each way the scooter is pulled. You will get this. (*Contact me if you need assistance making the ropes/snap shackles).

2 Ropes and scooter in each corner



- **Story time.** Tell the story and explain safety rules trying not to give away any hints.
- **Give it a go.** Students attempt task but will fail due to lack of knowledge, patience and frustration may set in. They try to just glide to the island or paddle to it. I remind them only one person can do that.
- **Give it a go #2.** The students will fail again, but several students will figure out the solution while the rest will continue to make mistakes and not knowing the solution. This happens all the time.
- **Stop and think.** Students stop, “*think, pair and share*” ideas to solving the problem and then try again. Teacher does not assist in solving problem.
- **Not organized yet.** Students will either fail again or succeed but without much organization and with possible arguments and frustration.
- **Share please.** Teacher may need to ask a student to stand up and share his/her idea with the entire ship’s passengers. Maybe a mini demo is helpful too. They solve the solution and do the task. They have to ferry each other back and forth using both ropes. Pulling and easing them. Teamwork.
- **Almost.** Students will refine for organization, duties/roles and responsibility. Teacher will time students but they just fail to succeed by a few seconds. Teacher will begin a countdown knowing the kids don’t make it. Oh no...so close!
- **Timed and the students win.** The teacher will begin a 10-second slow count down, but knowing the last student will just barely make it! The kids win and survive! (Hold your ears!)
- **Any corner.** Remind students that any player can go to any corner, with less players to escape the sinking ship! Judgment lesson.

- **Play it again?** Challenge the class! Would they like to try it again after just barely winning the game? Challenge them to share jobs, switch starters. And, that sometimes the best thing to do in cooperative challenges is to trust others to do their job. Sharing and responsibility lesson.

Variation/progression/gamify:

- **Found PFD's:** A wise student checked the ship's storage locker and found the PFD's, and now for extra safety the players must wear the PFD around their necks while traveling on the floats over to the island, and also must somehow figure out to get the PFD to float on the scooter for the trip back. Self-control and impulse-control lesson.



- **Play PFD's:** Play a game or two using the PFD's, notice the unique ways the student use to transport the PFD's back. (The best way is to turn the scooter upside down, wheels up and place the PFD/item on it, slide the scooter on its back.) If one item falls into the water the game is over for just that corner/group and they must start over. (Maybe drop a hint to them)



4 PFD's - Pro Tip: cut the straps and buckles off

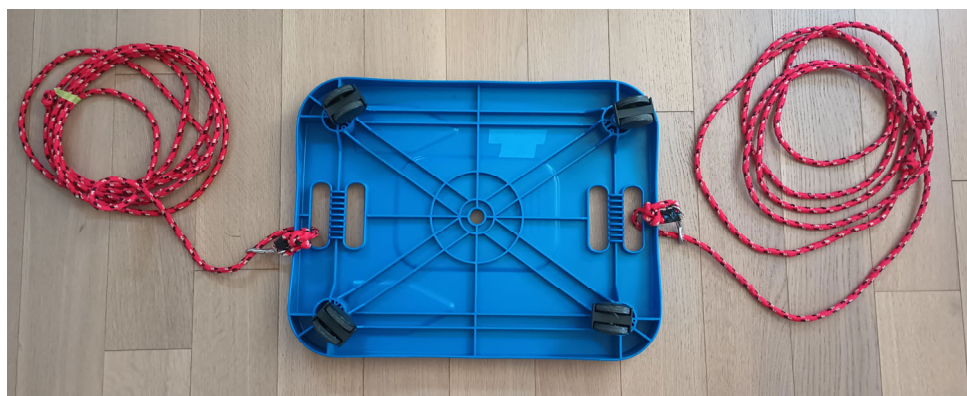


4 PFD's in one box!

- **Gold!** Gold is discovered on the ship-but don't touch it! Yellow foam balls. One in each corner. Just like Ship Wreck 2, they now also transport the gold nugget back and forth with each rider using a special carrying device/toilet plunger, high in the air. So now, they wear the **PFD**, hold the **TP** high in the air with the **gold nugget** in it. When they get to the island, they flip the scooter upside down and send all this back to the SS. The last rider brings it safely to the island and holds it safely until rescued. (By the Coast Guard)
- **Animals:** Transport four, one in each corner - a stuffed animal. The ship is carrying endangered animals that need our care and concern. Each corner must also transport animals back and forth with each rider along with the other items-from above. Things are getting, challenging, very difficult! We got this!
- After your students have successfully played several games and progressed to extended games, the teacher reappears safe and sound, after being rescued by the Coast Guard, to congratulate the children on the quality skills exhibited. All the children are so happy the teacher is safe and sound (empathy lesson) and they are also rescued, by the Coast Guard and live happily ever after due to their excellent **cooperation skills**.
- **They are all winners!**

Teaching Tip:

- For third graders, attaching the 8 snap shackles to the scooters, initially, is a positive adaptive, way to proceed. Attaching the shackles confuses the students and seems to really slow the game down. They get stuck just on this task.



Pro tip: 3rd grade, attach the ropes prior to the game

- All the various progressions cannot be done in one class. But can be added in the next class or later in the year or even the next school year.
- For large classes, have a fifth island, scooter, double rope triaged and ready to go is sometimes needed. **Pro tip:** these side ropes will be a tad shorter.

Closure:

- Ask your pupils what they liked best and learned from this experience.
- What was the most difficult part of the game?
- How did you do pulling the ropes gently and steady to save your classmates?
- Good luck putting this all together and playing it-see the children problem solve and get better game by game. It is without doubt an unusual game, experience and adventure. Please, let me know how it goes.
- Your class is now ready for a further cooperative challenge. **Cooperative Sports Stations!** Life is good. Back to stations.

Cooperative Stations

(B. Vandegrift/Sarratt) (Grades K-5)



Introduction:

Welcome to **Cooperative Stations!** My teaching buddy Brian Vandegrift, and I worked together on this structure at his beautiful school. We put our hearts and energy into making this a successful. I'm not sure who had more fun, us or the kids! I also would use this structure at my school over the next few years learning a great deal from Brian.

Each station has its own personality and flare. But our primary goal is cooperation and teamwork at each stations with a nice mixture of fitness, dance and sports to keep things interesting and balanced.

Why are we playing this game?

- ✓ To problem solve at each mini station with partner independence
- ✓ To work cooperatively with a partner or groups of three-complete the challenge
- ✓ To share jobs-sharing is caring
- ✓ To follow all game rules
- ✓ To develop trust and responsibility by doing your job in a cooperative game/challenge
- ✓ To work safely, use equipment safely so no one gets hurt

Equipment: (See samples below)

- Cone Shoulder Folders: Sportime #9-030846 Set-6 Holds 8X11 Mini poster/diagrams. Hand make/draw diagrams.
- Cones: 18" Set-6
- Music
- Specific Equipment: as needed by station-listed below

Organization: (see diagram below)

Set up a big circuit with stations around it, try to place one or two stations in the middle if they can fit. This is the ideal way to be efficient. Every gym is different in size and design. I've made this work in super large brand new gyms and small gyms with double classes. You got this!

Hand drawn artwork, works just fine. Yes, some of the kids jokes us about it...



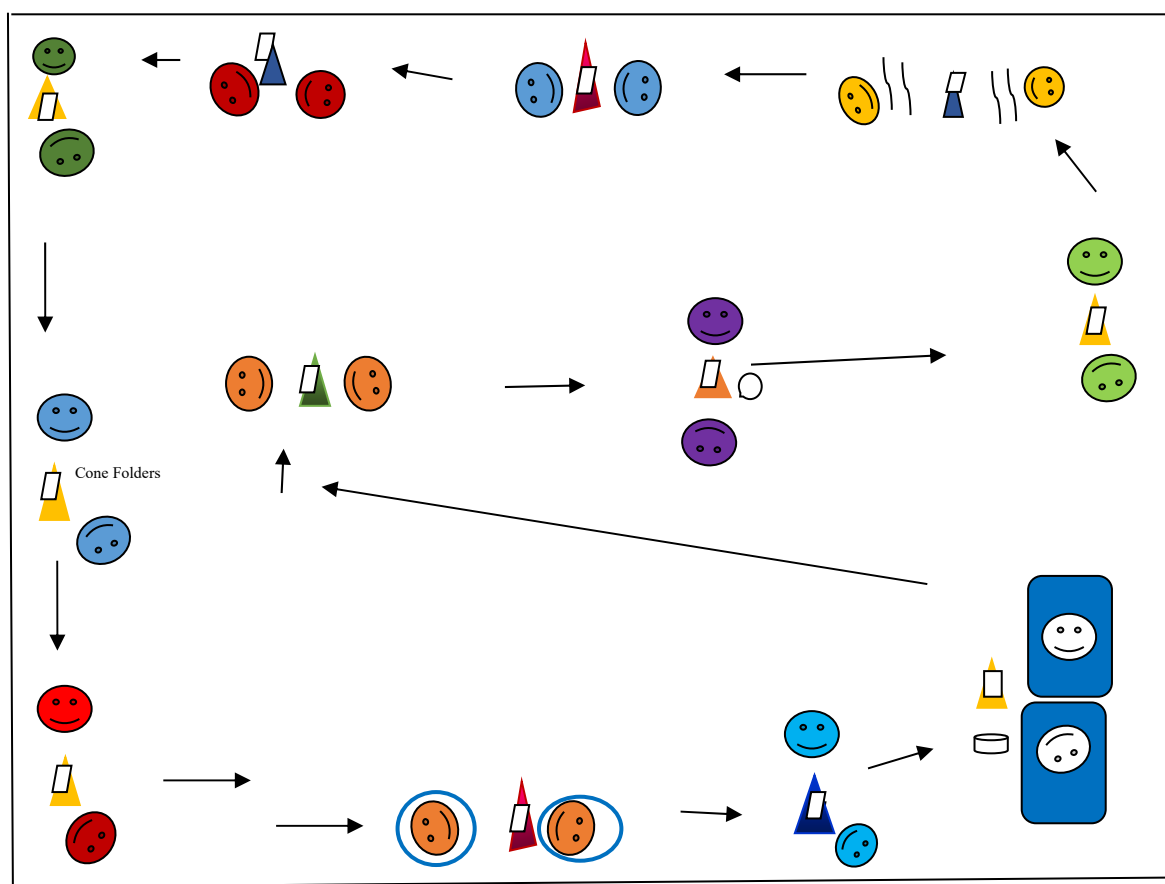
Towel Toss/Pop-it-Up!

Paddle/Balloon - partner tap

Hula Hoop



Cooperative Stations: with some flare added in



How we play Cooperative Sports Stations:

- Just like we did with **Fitness Stations**, think about how to set up your circuit with the following exercise components. However, we are going to highlight cooperative skills while keeping the focus on teamwork as discussed in this section.
With cooperatives and teamwork we balance the following when creating a circuit, focusing on cooperatives:
 - Upper body / lower body
 - Cardio / MS-ME/Muscles
 - Flex & yoga
 - Calisthenics and Exercises
 - Exercise Ball & Medicine Ball/Tubing
 - Tricks and skills: HH & JR, Balloon tap, dance station, (the Floss)
 - Cooperation: Partner and small groups challenges
 - As you know, the first four categories / fitness components are the base for fitness. This creates a fast simple set-up and break down. Often, little to no equipment is needed at these stations.
 - The middle two stations will need some equipment if used at all.
 - For cooperative stations, is of course the main focus, and the more creative and ideally spread out and mixed throughout the circuit. Some equipment is needed. (See samples below)
- A couple of examples are:
 - **Back to Back partner scooter riding:** partners sit and ride together, out around a turning cone, and back again.
 - **Yoga poses:** On tumbling mats cards (Yoga Pretzel), or **Hot Spots**, in a basket. Partners take turns picking one and yoga pose, and perform together. This is a fun game of chance and cooperative learning.
 - **Balloon tap:** Keep in up challenge. This station needs a little bigger space. Note: Walmart sells excellent quality/heavy duty balloons in packs of 3 or so. I buy these all the time.
 - **Paddle Balloon tap:** just like balloon tap, but use small, safe paddles.
 - **Dice Fitness Station:** see fitness routines
 - **Hula Hoops:** kids like the challenge of this stations. Keep the hoops going!
 - **Jump rope:** may need different sizes. Partner tricks!
 - **Dance:** Floss Dance/free dance/ ribbon sticks
 - **Corn Hole:** set-up a corn hole station, players can take turns tossing and scoring.
 - **Towel Toss:** see above how to play
 - **Tumbling Mats:** animals movements down the mats K-2, Cartwheels 3-5.

Procedure:

- Mix up and place your stations strategically around your circuit.
- A super-fast preview is not a bad idea, especially for the younger students.
- All students clean-up before rotating to the next station.
- Have partners or groups of three selected to a station. Teamwork, as discussed, is the key to **Cooperative Stations**. The **LPE**: listening, praising and encouraging each other. The sharing and caring. Playing honestly.
 - ✓ Start music
 - ✓ Play and exercise time 60+ seconds or so, use your best judgement/age/grade.

- ✓ Rotate
- ✓ Continue
- If you run out of time, that's okay, youngsters do not have to complete all stations. On the other hand, if you have extra time, it's okay for the pairs to repeat a couple stations.
- Regroup and try a few more.

Variation /Progression:

- Use your best judgment with **Cooperative Stations**, every PE teacher/program has their own tricks and equipment that will work wonders for a station. For example, I never had **Corn Hole** at my school, or any other school, Brian suggested it, worked great!

Teaching Tips:

- This is another fun structure and method for getting students to work cooperatively. Children like to work hard, and we need to honor them, however, they like being social at the same time with a buddy. Children like the concept of rotating and discovering what's "next" mindset? The problem solving, to figure out how to do something, especially with a buddy and perform it.
- This is a good structure toward of the year when motivation is key.
- In the next game, we continue this theme, however we place emphasis on the students to create the challenge. Time to shake things up!

Create a Cooperative Challenge (Sarratt et al.) (Grades 3-5))

Introduction:

Welcome to **Create a Cooperative Challenge**! We are going back into our equipment room again for this one. Also, for full disclosure I recognize that other teachers perform this activity as well. But it's worth including here. I've got experience teaching this game with my program style, challenging my students over the years with some success. Let's shake things up and provide a unique mini lesson or two.

So, what are we doing? Forming small groups that are able to make simple creative cooperative challenges. Students are making up the games! They are now in charge, making the up the challenges!

However, to keep things a tad simpler, I narrow the focus to the ***crossing the river/ocean*** type challenges. Kids love those stories/themes, and most importantly, are able to create them. If not, they can get stuck-and a whole class or two flies by with kids sitting, maybe even just arguing over just game ideas. However, later on, if a team feels strongly they want to make up something else, and they have a cooperative idea-they are allowed to go for it. But, it must be a cooperative game. Not a throwing and catching, kicking or basketball shooting type game. They would all do that, and we play enough of these of games during the years.

We all start with these first challenges and we are shaking things up!

Why are we playing this game-Create a Cooperative Challenge:

- ✓ To challenge students to create a cooperative challenge-adventure
- ✓ To create their own original game and play it.
- ✓ To give students personal agency.
- ✓ To use the equipment provided or ask for additional equipment if needed (If available at the time)

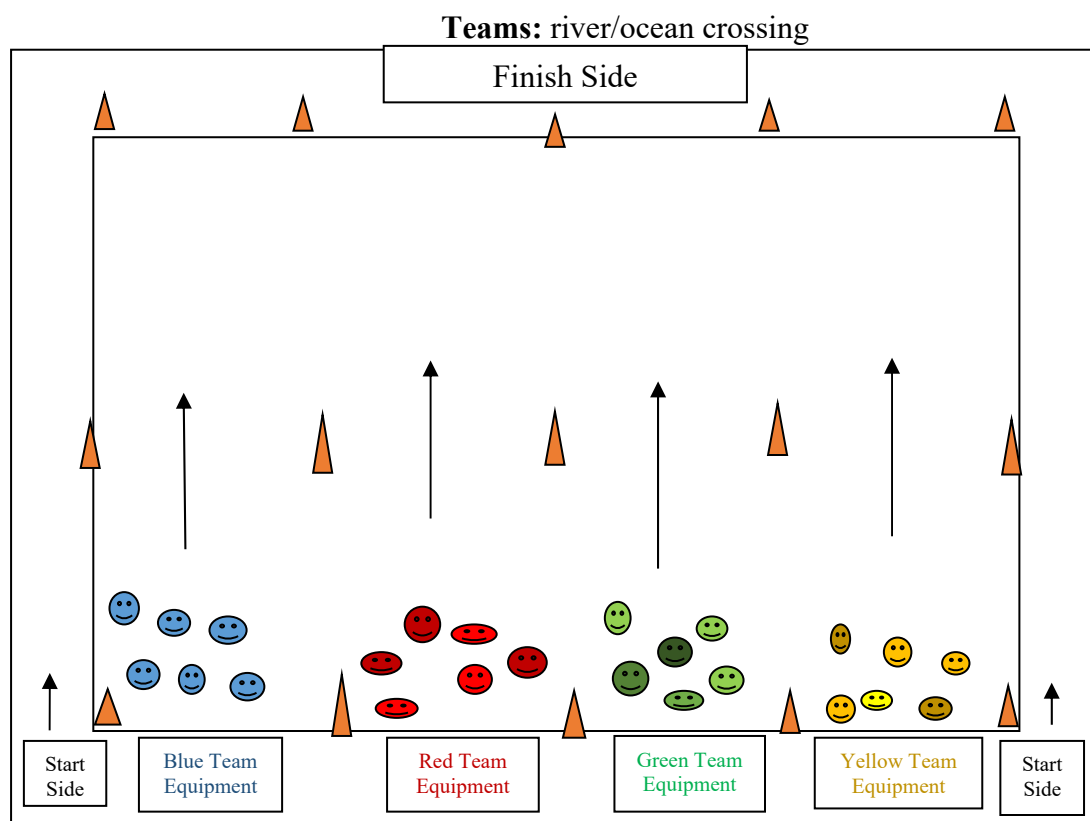
- ✓ To **LPE**: students will listen, praise, and encourage each other as they work/play showing sharing and caring with equipment and jobs (no one student is the boss)

Equipment at each station: (this is just an example-each program is different)

- Scooters: larger and small
- Cones: large and small
- Sharks on the floor-adds drama
- Ropes long and smaller/jump ropes
- Mats:
- Poly spots
- Dome cones
- Hula hoops: small
- Molded PVC animals
- Any equipment, you feel that is safe and can be used to provide a good challenge experience. Go ahead and add it. Delete any item that's not working out.

Organization: (See sample diagram below)

Create small teams of 5-6 members or so. Like mentioned in the introduction, the basic goal is for each team to create their own game/challenge using the equipment supplied, and try to cross the river/ocean. They can plan the game and create the game as they play it.



Basis rules/theme: (sample)

- ✓ Your team is stranded on the beach, ship wrecked/story/theme.
- ✓ A hurricane is approaching- your team must get off this beach to the other beach.
- ✓ The floor is freezing cold ocean water with sharks, cannot step or fall into it.
- ✓ If a teammate falls into it. Teams and equipment starts over. All the players. Try again. This happens all the time. Players honor this system.
- ✓ Share jobs and ideas. No one student is the boss or in charge. **LPE**
- ✓ Start on the first beach and complete challenge on finish side.
- ✓ Call teacher when done! New challenge. Modify and refine. Go for it!

How we play the game:

Procedure:

- Set-up all stations with identical equipment. (as best you can)
- Explain the goal of the game/story theme.
- Explain the rules and safety. (see below)
- Students write down student member's names.
- Students look over the equipment, but do not touch it yet.
- Students sit and make a pre-play plan thinking about the equipment-sharing ideas.
- Students write down the name of their **team**, and **game** on paper before starting.
- Students call teacher over before starting. *"We're ready Ms./Mr. Gym!"*
- Students choose the equipment and setting up their game trying to make game.
- Once they are ready, they can start trying to play the game with the equipment they have chosen.
- At any time teammates are allowed to stop, change, fix, and rearrange the equipment and how they are playing the challenge. This is a constant give and take, trial and error until the kids get it.
- Once the students have their game done. Made it across. They call the teacher over to show you! Now, they may have a **name** for the game, write it on the paper.
- **Bonus points:** write down rules of the game.
- Depending on time replay and refine.
- Teacher collects team paper, assess/grade. Rubric.

Variation/progression:

- Create four different games:
- Each area has different equipment, rotate each team through this area.
- See if the team can problem-solve, create and play in four different areas/equipment/game challenge.
- Set a time limit so you can fit in all games within 2/4 classes depending on your schedule.

Teaching Tips:

- Set up your own rules/expectations that that best fits your program.
- Good luck with **Create a Cooperative Challenge**, let me know how it goes!

Team Building Through Physical Challenges: Donald Glover/Daniel Midura



Welcome to Teambuilding! When it comes to Team Building and Challenges the *Holy Grail* for me are the two ***Team Building Through Physical Challenges*** books, by Donald Glover and Daniel Midura. These two books transformed my teaching in more ways than I can say. In full honesty, I thought I was already doing okay work with cooperative learning. I was certified in my county as an INC instructor. Taken middle and elementary school children through our adventure courses at **Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center**. I read and studied the subject, putting the material into practice. Then one day my life changed. I was about to learn a whole lot more...

Early on a Tuesday January morning, the topic of teambuilding was being discussed on a PE digest chat group, over two decades ago; Susie Necker from Baltimore County Public Schools invited me to her county PE in-service at her school. She actually called my school and left her number for her session, that night. My lucky day! I was the only teacher not from BCPS and very nervous. She was impactful and showed us an entirely new system and structure to conduct **Cooperative Games and Teambuilding Challenges**. We did not participate-she showed us, step by step the stations in her gym and wisely explained the Glover and Midura method.

Upon leaving she gave me the handout - of all handouts! 28 pages dedicated to the in-service. (I still have it.) The next day I ordered the two books from **Human Kinetics** and read them cover to cover, over and over, memorized the material as best as I could.

I got permission to teach the unit from both my principal and PE coordinator and prepared the unit for over a year. It was an entirely new under taking and I was fired-up.

Through my PE budget, I ordered any necessary equipment and on my own obtained some of the weird ones like old used car tires, ropes, plungers, 5 gallon bucket, gloves, poles and boards, etc. I didn't care how hard it was to attain or how much it cost. Also, bringing down my huge and heavy gymnastic parallel bars to make the "wall" is always difficult task for the unit. I had the huge cage ball thankfully to make *The Whole World* challenge. I made all the challenge cards and organizer cards on heavy duty card stock paper and hand drew all the diagrams myself. Things were coming together. I had parent volunteers in every class to assist me.

I taught the unit many times over the next several decades. I created original TB challenges for the unit and added those as well. Some were good, and some were forgettable. When our school became a PYP school, I used this unit, as my first *Unit of Inquiry*. I contacted Dan Glover and we have become quite friendly on the subject and he offered me sound advice over the years. Last point, I gave a Power Point presentation on this subject at our **Shape MD** conference and explained the unit to PE teachers across the state of Maryland. I made posters, with photos for every game for them to see. This really brought the unit to life. And yes, we played **Huddles** as a warm-up! The teachers loved that!

I share all this information, because, make no mistake, it is a considerable enterprise; but like everything in life, difficult things end up being worth the effort. Several teachers in my county have since taught this unit and we have shared ideas on it. Like so many authors have shared about this unit, our students gained unique insight and skills that are simply not possible elsewhere. I believe deep in my heart, they are better students and people due to it.

At this point you may think I'm going to unpack the unit, and break it down by point by point. First, there probably is the aspect of copyright issues. Second, there is only one way to truly learn it. That is to buy and read the books from the original masters themselves. Maybe, like me, it will change your life! Please let me know how it goes!

1. Glover, Donald R. and Midura, Daniel W. (1992) *Team Building Trough Physical Challenges*. Human Kinetics Books
2. Glover, Donald R. and Midura, Daniel W. (1995) *More Team Building Trough Physical Challenges*. Human Kinetics Books

Thank you Susie for that invitation all those years ago!

Closure to Cooperative Challenges:

Congratulation! Any effort we make toward being cooperative, providing challenges and moving towards the world of teambuilding is a positive, beautiful way to enhance a physical education program. I thank all you for your contributions and I wish you all the best! *Dale*

