COOPERATIVE GAMES - LEARNING FOR LIFE

Cooperative Games promote individual and team success through group interaction. They are fun to play and include all students, regardless of age, size, or ability level.

COOPERATIVE GAMES
1. Require little or no equipment.
2. Are not dependent upon athletic ability. Anyone can play.
3. Welcome participation, creativity, and personal expression.
4. Mean that competition is against the limits of one’s own abilities.
5. Encourages interaction from all levels of play – the competitive to the more reserved students.
6. Can take place anywhere.

The four basic components of a successful cooperative game:
• Cooperation
• Acceptance
• Involvement
• FUN

A game of “Fish Gobbler” (Orlick, 1978) shows how collaborative skills can help children accomplish a goal.

“Upon hearing the Fish Gobbler “Fishnet” command, most of the children quickly ran to the middle of the play space and joined hands. The circle formed rapidly, as hands were being held and arms pulled. One boy remained standing about five feet from the circle until one of the others players called, “Over here, c’mon, we need you.” When the boy heard the call, he smiled and said, “OK” and joined the circle.”

Why Must They Always Lose??

These lines suggest a brand new look at the kids we often abuse.
We make them take part in games and sports knowing they will lose.
Like selecting sides for softball games with a democratic way to choose some poor kid will be picked last.
Ed never pitches or plays first base or wears the shortstops shoes.
The captain says, “Go play left field.”
Why must he always lose??
And when the team moves in to bat he hears disheartening news.
“Listen slob, your turn is last.”
Why must he always lose??
Perhaps we need to modify traditional team sport views cause I’m convinced that at least 50% are surely destined to lose.
This poem has no ending,
No brilliant thought to peruse.
I simply wish our program could reduce the times they lose.

Ambrose Brazelton

From the Editors

Physical education programs offer enjoyable ways to learn many life skills. Some of the most important skills to be learned are the value of participation, the joy of effort, cooperation, communication, sharing, and teamwork. Cooperative games and activities provide unique opportunities for students to learn many of these skills through positive interaction, as well as to learn to communicate effectively and to develop an appreciation of fair play. In addition, teachers have the opportunity to ensure that their program is fun and inclusive regardless of age, size, or ability level. Too often children are put into the win/lose situation where it becomes easy to lose sight of the value that the activity has to offer, and especially the joy of participation.

We would like to thank those individuals who generously contributed to this issue of The Clipboard. We look forward to your thoughts, ideas and input for our next issue: “Lead-up Games”. Please forward your contributions to h.sawchuk@sympatico.ca.

WHY MUST THEY ALWAYS LOSE??

Steve Grineski (Human Kinetics, 1996)


ICE BREAKERS

Ice Breakers may be the most important activity of all! Students actually feel like they have been “seen” by everyone. Ice Breakers help students to understand the importance of body language and eye contact and improves non-verbal communication skills.

1. Students walk randomly around the room and are not allowed to make eye contact, touch or talk. After a moment – in total silence – ask the group to “Freeze”. They must line-up, in silence, using one of the criteria listed below.

2. Have students randomly move about the room, this time making equal eye contact. After a few minutes of eye contact, call “Freeze” and have the students line-up, again using one of the criteria below.

3. Upon completion, have students walk around randomly again, this time making eye contact, smiling and offering a positive greeting – the same for everyone! Again, line up using one of the criteria below.

4. Finally, have students walk around making eye contact, offering a positive greeting, and an appropriate touch (i.e. high five, hand shake, short bow).

5. Debrief about how it feels to not be seen. Go on to discuss how some students normally receive a lot of eye contact, while others feel more “unseen”. Discuss the importance/relevance of how to treat others, and how to give and receive respectful behaviour.

Suggested Criteria for lining up (in silence)
- Shortest to tallest
- Smallest to largest feet
- From lightest colored eyes to darkest eyes
- Light to dark clothing
- Birthdays – January to December (remember in silence)
- Oldest to youngest (different than above which is only months and days, not year of birth)
- Others...

KING BULLFROG

Each person creates a sign (slap hands, snap fingers, etc.) The object is to move up the chain and become King. King bullfrog begins by making their sign and someone else’s. The person who created the other sign must make their sign and someone else’s. Play continues. Whoever makes a mistake moves to the King’s left and everyone moves one seat clockwise.

SHOE STORE

Students remove both shoes and place them in a pile. Each student takes two unmatched shoes that do not belong to him/her. The object of the game is for all students to line up so that every shoe ends up as a matched pair beside each other.

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TRICKS OF THE TRADE TO ENSURE EQUAL PARTICIPATION
- Mix teams if one student is dominating.
- Use smaller teams and rotate more frequently.
- Change boundaries.
- Be prepared to substitute a new game when one is not going well.
- Stop the game during a positive moment so students will want to play again.
- Ask for student feedback.
- Make sure there is enough equipment for everyone.

“ I really like the games where I feel left in ”
Grade 9 student
TOP TEN COOPERATIVE WARM-UPS

Here are the “Top Ten” warm-up activities as selected by the OAC students of Niagara District Secondary School. Students were asked to indicate their favourite cooperative physical education warm-up activities.

10. **Three Person Link Tag** – Divide the class into groups of three. Each group should link arms and spread throughout the area. Designate 3-4 “Its” (with markers) and 5-6 “not-Its”. To avoid being tagged, the “non-Its” hook arms with one of the groups. The player at the other end of that group must release and become a “non-It”. The objective is for the “Its” to tag a “non-It” and give them the marker. The “It” becomes a “non-It”.

9. **Capture the Flag** - A team tag game that requires each team to “hide” a flag in their area. The object of the game is to “capture” the other team’s “flag” and return it to their area. A team may defend their area by tagging invaders and putting them in Jail where they stay unless tagged free by a teammate.

8. **Progressive Bump** - Set up four stations of the game “Bump”. Bump is a game where players are eliminated when another player behind them scores a basket before they do. In “Progressive Bump”, no one is eliminated. When you “bump” someone you move up one station, when you get “bumped” you move down one station. The object of the game is to get to the highest station (Major League) within the time limit.

7. **Geometric Forms** - Divide students into two groups (fewer than 15). Each player is blindfolded, and each group has a length of rope. The “Challenge” is for the group to form a designated geometric form with the rope within a time limit.

6. **Race Track** - Set up a “race track” in the gymnasium using pylons to indicate turns. In pairs, one person sits on a scooter (driver) while the other is the engine (pusher). After each lap, they exchange positions.

5. **Back to Back** – Start with students in pairs, sitting back to back and arms linked. The object is to stand up without releasing. Proceed to four, eight, sixteen, and eventually the whole class.

4. **Chain-Tag** - When “It” tags someone, they join hands. Object is to link up the whole group.

3. **Pick-up Tag** - “Non-Its” play low to the ground or on the ground. The “Its” add to their number by working as a team to pick the “non-Its” off the ground. N.B. Stress picking up and putting down gently!

2. **You’re Up... You’re Down** - A dodgeball game where the object of the game is to be the last person standing. When hit (below the waist) you’re down. When down, and you hit someone that’s up... they’re down and you’re up. To make the game cooperative, the down people can get up by assisting one another with passes.

1. **Paramedic** – Another dodgeball game where each team identifies two “paramedics” with markers and a scooter. A “safe” hospital area is designated for each team. When hit, the player calls for the “paramedic” to rescue and take him/her, via the scooter, to the hospital. Once players go to the hospital, they can re-enter the game. The object of the game is to eliminate the paramedics (hint: team players should try to protect the paramedic.)

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*Giving and sharing never move in a straight line. They always move in circles.*

Robert Schuller
BODY ENGLISH
In groups of 8 or 10, students use their imagination and bodies to form words. Let the other groups guess the word.

TEAM-A-POD
Each team will move themselves across an area collectively (joined) with only a designated number of body parts in contact with the floor. The Challenge becomes increasingly more difficult. If more than the number of specified contact points touch the floor, the entire team must return to the starting line. Teamwork is the key to this challenge. The group is successful when the entire team crosses the finish line.

Additions and variations
- Use scooters or carpet squares that are not considered as points in contact with the floor.
- Create obstacles in the path.
- Change the number of contact points.
- Make a number of contact points larger for a younger group.
- Have the group travel to the finish line using a specified number of contact points and back to the starting line with a different number of contact points.

DRAGON-TAIL
This is a mass activity. Divide groups of 5-6 players into “Dragons”. Players line up and hold on to the waist of the person in front of them. A scarf (Dragon’s Tail) is tucked into the shorts of the last person. The object is for each team to catch the tail of other teams.

THE RIVERBOAT
The Riverboat is an introductory challenge that requires a group to transport themselves across a large open space. There is one basic solution to this task, and it usually takes a group the better part of a class period to successfully complete the challenge. The team must transfer themselves from one end of a basketball court-sized area to the other end without touching the floor with their bodies. The group uses two folded tumbling mats to create a riverboat. The mats must be moved in such a manner that they do not come unfolded.

Success Criteria
The Riverboat challenge is mastered when all group members have successfully crossed the gym space (the river) without touching the floor with their bodies. All the assigned equipment must be brought to the opposite side of the river as well.

Rules and Sacrifices
If a group member touches the floor with any part of the body, the entire group must go back to the starting position. All the equipment must be brought across the river.

Additions and Variations
To make this task more difficult, create obstacles in the river or require a portage to take place. Consider creating a storm story to help the group reach certain points within a time limit.

Too many cooks spoil the broth, but two heads are better than one!
In his Cooperative Sports and Games Book (Random House), Professor Terry Orlick denounces the majority of children’s games as “rigid, judgmental, highly organized and excessively goal-oriented.” Not only do they guarantee failure and rejection of the losers, they destroy even the winners by encouraging children to delight in each other’s failures.

REMINDER
With Cooperative Play, we are trying to minimize competition, not discourage it. Create an environment that encourages the student to try and to help them experience success. This allows self-esteem to flourish and lets everyone be “a winner”.

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TRUST ACTIVITIES

Circle – Ask the whole class to form a circle holding hands. Number each student 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, ... On the signal (Go), have the “1's” lean inwards to the middle and the “2’s” lean outwards. The goal is to balance and support each other. Hold this position for 10 – 15 seconds. Switch the player who leans in/out. Encourage students to keep their bodies straight and upright, not bent at the waist.

Partner Squeeze – Working in pairs give each group one beanbag. The pairs are at one end of the room. Have the students place the beanbag between their foreheads and move to the opposite end of the room and back. Next, change the location of the beanbag. Try elbows, knees, backs, shoulders, thumbs, and buttocks. You may also try making the groups larger by putting three or four students in a group (add more beanbags). Consider different objects such as balloons, balls, paddles, books, and rubber chickens.

Human Camera – In partners, one partner is blindfolded and the sighted partner selects an object to be photographed. The sighted partner leads the blindfolded player to the object using only oral directions (discuss safety prior to the activity). Once the blindfolded player gets to the object, they lift off the blindfold for 4-5 seconds. The partners switch roles. Once each player has had a turn, they describe to each other what they saw.

Pea Shooter – A sighted player leads a blindfolded player to other blindfolded players. All blindfolded players have a sponge or a second blindfold tied into a knot. All the blindfolded players attempt to throw sponges at each other. If hit, the player must do or say something (tell a joke, recite a short poem, perform an action, etc).

Organize Yourselves – All students wear blindfolds. The class/group must try to organize themselves in a line based on: height, gender or birth month. Consider starting in small groups to get the class accustomed to this activity.

Hunting – Divide your class into four groups, each student wears a blindfold. Scatter a variety of objects (balls, beanbags, pinnies) into the play area. Have three members from each team go out into the area, by crawling or sliding on their buttocks, to find one item each and return it to their corner. Another team member must take the item back. There should be no more than three students per team in the playing area at a time. No one is to be standing at any time during this game.

Additions and variations
- Add other methods of locomotion.
- You may want each group to get only one sample of each item. This challenges the teammates to communicate with each other regarding what items are being gathered.

FOR A QUICK CHANGE OF PACE, TRY …

The Long, Long, Long Jump – In teams, each player takes a standing long jump from the landing point of the previous jumper. The team with the greatest distance wins.

United We Sit – In a large circle, students turn their right shoulder in to the center and shuffle closer to the person in front. On a given command, “all sit” on the knees of the person behind them. Increase the challenge by trying, “sit... up ... turn... sit.”

Crowded Island – How many people can you fit on a gym mat??

Pyramids - Start in groups of three, gradually increase the challenge (and the size of the pyramid.)

Human Pretzel – Students stand in a circle, place their hands in the centre, and grasp the hands of two different people (any other player except those located on either side). The group must work together to untie the knot without releasing hands.

Human Machine – In groups, students must use all members of the group to form a machine with moving parts. Demonstrate their “machine” to the class.

Pass the Hoop – The group joins hands in a circle. Place two Hula-hoops between two students. See how quickly they can pass the hoops around the circle (over the students) in opposite directions. The Hula-hoops must move through each other and back to their original start points. To increase the challenge, add more hoops.
BOOP (2-8) – Using a large balloon, players in a circle join hands and try to keep the balloon off the floor by batting with any parts of their bodies. If the balloon touches the floor, the group loses the use of their hands. As the balloons continue to fall to the floor, students must keep removing parts of the anatomy that are allowed to strike the balloon (e.g. elbows, shoulders, head, etc.) (Kohnke – Silver Bullets)

BUMP AND SCOOT (6-8) – Start the game with all players on the same side of a volleyball court. The object is to get all players to the other side. Using a balloon, each player volleys the balloon to another and then scoots under the net. The last player taps the balloon over the net and the process is repeated. (Orlick- Cooperative Sports and Games Book)

COLLECTIVE SCORE BLANKETBALL (4-8) – Two teams use a blanket to toss a beach ball back and forth over a volleyball net. Each time the ball is tossed over the net by one team and caught by the other team, one collective point is scored. (Orlick – Cooperative Games and Sports Book)

FROZEN BEAN BAG TAG (JK-6) – All players begin by moving around the gym at their own pace, balancing a beanbag on their head. If the beanbag falls off, they are “frozen”. Another player must pick up the beanbag and place it on the “frozen” player’s head to “free” that player (without losing their own bean bag!) This activity is fun when played to music. (Davies – Cooperative Games for People Who Love to Play)

IN GEAR (4-8) – Divide students into various sized groups (five, seven, nine, eleven, etc.) Each group becomes a “gear” by forming a tight circle facing inwards, holding hands. The smallest gear touches the next largest one, which touches the next largest one, and so on. Each student is a “gear tooth”. As gears turn, players in one circle fit or mesh into spaces between gear teeth in the adjoining circle. The smallest gear begins turning and starts the next turning. The smaller the gear, the faster it must turn. The smallest gear can set and vary the speed. Variation: call “change” to reverse direction. (Gregson – The Incredible Indoor Games Book)

NON-ELIMINATION SIMON SAYS (JK-6) – Students follow the leader in performing a variety of warm-up exercises on the command “Simon Says Do This”. Students who follow the command “Do This”, instead of “Simon Says Do This”, walk quickly around the room and then rejoin the game. (Source Unknown)

PAPER GAMES (2-6) – Students place one sheet of used (recycled) paper under each foot. The paper has now become a pair of skates. Without picking up their feet, the students “skate” around the gym. They can skate forwards, backwards, sideways, with partners, in groups, etc. When finished, ask students to suggest other active uses for the scrunched up paper. (OPHEA – Active Kids, Anywhere, Anytime)

YOU CAN MAKE ANY GAME MORE COOPERATIVE

Whole Court Rotation in Volleyball – On change of serve, all players rotate so teams change with each new server (skills are the same and score doesn’t matter.)

All Touch Rule - All players must touch the ball, puck, ring etc., before each team can score.

Play to a Tie – In a variety of games.

Everybody Score – In any game, first team to have everyone score... wins!

People vs. Points – In volleyball, the server drafts a player from the opposite team when a point is made. The game continues until one team disappears.

Mystery Scorers – The team wins when the “Mystery Scorers” (selected by teacher) scores.

Collective Score – The games end when the collective score (selected by teacher) is achieved.

Ladder Tournaments – Rather than elimination.

Substitution Rotations – A new player is substituted in after each score. Everyone is in a set substitution sequence by number.

JUST FOR FUN
COOPERATIVE
FITNESS ACTIVITIES

Divide the group into “Quads” rather than “Squads”. The “Quads” work together as a team to complete fitness-training activities.

**Run Rummy** - Each lap of a track or measured course that is completed by each team member is rewarded with a playing card. The team must compare and combine their cards as they run to accumulate a “run” (a series of consecutive cards). The length of the “run”, required suits, and so on can be determined by the teacher based on the level of the group.

**Aerobic Quad Share** – Each quad creates an aerobic routine to a favourite song. The entire class completes all of the routines, thus creating an entire workout. Less vigorous routines can be selected for the warm up and cool down segments.

**Circle Sit-ups** - All members of the quad are in the sit-up position with their toes in the center of the circle. As the sit-ups are performed, a ball is passed to each player. Consecutive catches can be counted.

**Cumulative Chin-ups or Push-ups** – Have an index card for each quad and a daily time where teams establish team goals and accumulate a team total for the day. Keep a running record of the team’s total improvement toward the goal.

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COOPERATIVE
PARACHUTE ACTIVITIES

Kindergarten

The circle defined by a parachute offers a cooperative way to communicate with a group of students. The circle puts all members of the group on an equal footing. Parachutes provide equal and maximum participation by all members of the group. The very dynamics of moving the parachute means cooperation is a must. Parachute activities reinforce this ideal by being more fun and successful when everyone cooperates.

**Inflating the Chute** - Everyone squats around the edge, holding the parachute with both hands. On the signal, all participants stand up and raise the chute above their heads until their arms are fully extended.

**Chuting Stars** - Raising the chute at least waist high, designate various students (by number) to run under the chute while it is inflated. Variations: Travel like animals or using different forms of locomotion. If a player is caught, have the group count the “bumps” and countdown (10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1) as they exit.

**Walking on Water** (Waves, Bubbles or Clouds) - Have half the players get on top of the chute while the rest of the players make waves for the children to walk run or crawl across. Vary the intensity. Switch groups.

**Revolving Sit-ups** – Players sit around the chute with their legs underneath, toes toward the middle, and the chute pulled tight. While still holding the chute, players lie back and pull themselves up using the parachute to help. After several repetitions, groups on the opposite side start “helping” by keeping the chute taut, thus making these cooperative sit-ups.

**Silk House** - Children sit around the chute, hold on to the outside edge, and crawl all the way under it. While facing the center they pull the chute silk behind their backs and tuck it under their bottoms. When everyone is seated with their legs flat on the floor, students are asked to rock the house by pushing back gently on the material with their backs. You can get the rocking house to move in a circular way by indicating the direction the players should lean as they rock.

**Ring Games** - Add excitement to ring games such as “Ring Around the Rosie” by adding a parachute. Players hold the shoot in the right hands and walk around the circle singing the rhyme.

**Funny Faces** - Players inflate the chute, take one step toward the center, stick their heads underneath, and wrap the parachute around their heads and under their chins like a headscarf. They can then make funny faces as they kneel and then lie down stretched out on their stomachs. Under the chute is a circle of heads, outside the chute is a circle of bodies.

Cooperative Sports and Games Book, Orlick.
TRASH BALL

Recycled, affordable, easily accessible, and versatile, this material offers more than 101 uses for co-operative activities.

HOW TO MAKE A TRASH BALL

Four pages of newspaper are rolled tightly into a ball. The rolled newspaper ball is placed into a plastic grocery bag. Compress the grocery bag into a ball. To hold the loose ends of the plastic bag together, cover with a piece of duct tape.

Trash balls are
- Easy to repair, maintain and simple to make
- Good for co-ed co-operative activities
- Easy to catch, throw and kick
- A good environmentally-friendly piece of equipment
- Useful for co-operative activities with all ages

Trash balls can be used for
- Indoor snowballs
- Catching, throwing and kicking co-operative activities
- Problem solving initiative tasks
- Replacements of harder balls in developing motor skills

Submitted by Alf Grigg R.D.M.R., City of Toronto Parks and Recreation
Introduced to the idea by John Jorgenson, Camp Tawingo

WANT TO LEARN MORE???
CHECK OUT THESE GREAT RESOURCES AVAILABLE THROUGH CAHPERD

Cooperative Learning in Physical Education (Grineski) - $24.25 member; $26.95 non-member

Win Win Tag Games (Budwill) - member $13.45; non-member $14.95
Growing up through Games and Play (Lehnert/Lachmann) - member $16.15; non-member $17.95

Everybody Play (Losher) - member $13.45, non-member $14.95
Team Building through Physical Challenges (Glover/Midura) - member $25.95; non-member $28.55

More Team Building Challenges (Glover/Midura) - member $25.95; non-member $28.55

The Need to Win

When an archer is shooting for nothing
He has all his skill.
If he shoots for a brass buckle
He is already nervous.
If he shoots for a prize of gold
He goes blind
Or sees two targets.
He is out of his mind.
His skill has not changed
But the prize divides him.
He cares.
He thinks more of winning
Than of shooting
And the need to win
Drains him of power.
Is it more important to win or to shoot??

Chuang Tzu