

Cooperative Learning with MVPA in Mind

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Goal for the day:

- 1) To help teachers meet NASPE standards #3 – *Participates regularly in physical activity* – and #5 – *Exhibits responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others in physical activity settings*.
 - a. To learn and participate in various cooperative learning activities that will work with your students in your physical education classes.
 - b. To modify some cooperative learning activities for increased physical activity.

Why worry about physical activity during a cooperative games unit? Why not? Many cooperative learning activities have potential to promote physical activity, and just as many are sedentary. Not only are some cooperative activities sedentary, but there can be extended *wait time* for students, which allows them to disengage from the task and any learning outcomes you may have. *Healthy People 2010* established a goal for teachers and their students – that students are engaged at moderate to vigorous levels of physical activity (MVPA) for at least 50% of class time. The national average is 37% MVPA. We encourage you to do cooperative learning activities while being ever mindful of MVPA. Learning responsibility and social skills and being physically active are not mutually exclusive concepts, and we propose tying them together.

Ice Breakers & Deinhbitizers - getting groups comfortable with one another

Moving Team Juggle – (Groups of 5-7) This is the typical team juggle, but with movement in mind. Everyone makes a circle. One person (who has 3 balls) begins tossing one ball while calling out the name of the person tossing to. A pattern is established in the group where no one passes to their immediate neighbor. As people get comfortable with one ball and the pattern, another ball is added; a third may be added as well. Soon thereafter, people begin moving independently around the area (the group does not move as a unit). Tossing and catching in the established order is the goal. If a ball is dropped, the game begins again.

Animal Name Game – (Groups of 5-7) Each individual in a group introduces themselves and in the introduction they include an animal that begins with the same first letter (e.g., I'm Frank and I'm a frog). As soon as everyone has had the opportunity to introduce themselves, they reintroduce with the animal movement, at which point everyone in the group mimics the animal as well.

MORPH – (all) This activity is about morphing from one being to another, and one morphs through a rock, paper, scissors process. This has been done using eggs, chickens, Neanderthal man, coolman and superhero. We're morphing through couch potato, weekend warrior, active all stars, superhero. All couch potatoes (squat and extend arm like changing channels) mill around and find a partner; partners play rock, paper, scissors. The winner moves on to become a weekend warrior (sprint, lay down), the loser stays a couch potato and plays another game. Weekend warriors who win rock, paper, scissors become active all stars (speed walk at a constant pace). Active all stars who win become superheros (assume superman position flying (running) through the gym). Superheros who win run 7 steps then

stop and sing “*Stop in the name of love, before you break my heart*”, then run and sing again. This continues until the entire group is singing, at which point the game ends.

Introductory Challenges

Rock, paper, scissors tag (Groups of 3) Group of three play rock, paper, scissors (RPS). The two students who have the same figure (a rock, paper or scissors) become a team while the odd person out speed walks away. The duo must first hold hands, do a cooperative see saw, and then speed walk (still holding hands) to tag the third person. Flags or scarves can be used for students who do not wish to hold hands. Once tagged the game begins again.

See Saw (partners) Individuals sit facing each other with feet flat on the floor. Each person sits on the other’s feet and either hold hands or hand to forearm/elbow. Partners rock back and forth, sliding the feet as they go. The goal is to move across the gym in that fashion.

Human Lawn Darts or Partner Golf (partners; hula hoops or deck rings, 1 per partner) Human lawn darts will work for all ages; partner golf requires better hand/eye coordination. This is somewhat of a relay race, with the goal of all getting to the finish line (with support from others). Both partners must toss and be a human target. The task is to toss the hula hoop (or deck ring) in the air with the goal of it ringing the partner (or the partner ‘catching’ the deck ring on their extended arm). Upon catching, the throwing partner can move (speed walk) past their partner, stopping at ‘just the right spot’ to make a catch. Each partner tosses and catches, each choosing the best distance to make a catch. No advancing down the field of play until the catcher catches the ring.

Team Square (Groups of 4-5; dome cones) Groups of 4-5 work together. This activity requires a deliberate set up of the dome cones (see diagram). The goal in the set up is to create four/five paths crossing, one from each side of the square, each path represented by a different color. At least two/three paths should be set up so that they cannot be crossed unassisted. However, do not disclose this information to the group. Students are told that each group will be assigned a specific color of dome cone. Groups are to cross the area using their hands and their assigned colored cones without touching the ground. Depending on the group the challenge will either become a competitive or cooperative event. After round one is completed, the instructor can add a rule that each team must traverse every colored path.



Giants, Wizards & Dwarves (Large group divided into 2 teams) This is a larger version of rock, paper, scissors and is more physically active as it requires whole body movements and chasing and tagging. Giants squish dwarves; Wizards ‘zap’ giants; Dwarves gnaw the wizards knees. Each group decides, as a group, to be either a giant, wizard or dwarf. Groups meet in the middle, lined up across the gym facing

one another. Everyone yells out “Giants, wizards, dwarves” and then make the shape they agreed to as a team as they yell the name of the shape they are making (giants = standing as tall and big as possible; wizards = standing and zapping with their wand; dwarves = crouched down gnawing on knees). Whatever shape trumps the other becomes the chasing team; the others flee to the wall behind them. If someone is tagged they join the other team.

Giant’s Jump Rope (Groups of 2, 3, 6, 10; one large / long jump rope) Use a 15-20 ft. section of rope. Assign two enders. Switch these roles often during the activity. Ask enders to turn the rope “front door.” Students line up in a double file line, shoulder to shoulder with their partner. Ask each group to run through and come back to their original position as the rope spins. No jumping. Allow each group to practice. Now it’s time for the challenge! Each group must run through the rope in a “rapid fire manner.” Rapid fire means no space (i.e., turns of the rope) between themselves and the group ahead of them. It would look like this...rope hits the floor, group 1 goes through, rope hits the floor, group 2 goes through, etc. Each group must get back to their original starting point. This task gets increasingly more difficult as you progress to 6 or 10 students. Once the group understands the activity and has had practice with long rope jumping, you might challenge each group to jump one time and then exit back to the line.

Challenges to ponder for the activities we love – ‘How can we make this activity, well... more active?’

Circle the Circle (Groups of 5-10; 1-2 hula hoops and 1 jump rope / group) This is a traditional cooperative activity that is sedentary, but fun. Everyone in the circle joins hands, with the hula hoop (and eventually the rope) hanging from someone’s arm / hand. The group must pass the hula around the circle without breaking hands. The task is to move it as quickly as possible. Once this has been established, add the second hula hoop and/or jump rope (that has been tied in a knot).

Caterpillar (Groups of 5-6) The group must find a way to suspend themselves off the floor so only their hands are touching the floor (everyone’s hands must touch the floor). While this can be done in a line, another spin on this activity is that everyone must be connected to at least 2 people.

Switcheroo (Entire group) The task is for all students to first line up on a line or balance beam in any random order. The next task is for students to rearrange themselves in order of birthday, age, height or some other ordering system. To make the challenge more difficult, students may not talk.

Balloon / Ball Trolley (With partners or groups of 5-7; lots of balls, at least 1 / pair) This is a moderately paced activity but our job is to see if we can increase the activity level. Partners / groups can use balloons or various sized balls as they work to walk around the gym keep the ball suspended between body parts without using their hands. For example, partners must use their shoulders to keep the ball suspended while they walk around the room.

Crossing the River (Groups of 5-7; 2 scooters, 2 deck rings, 1 long jump rope / group) The task is to cross the river (which typically is the width or half-court length of a basketball court) and it goes without saying that teams must do so collaboratively and collectively; no individual crossings! Teams must cross

the river without stepping foot in the river itself using the equipment provided. If any part of a person's body touches the river, that person and another who has successfully crossed must be sacrificed and start over. The first person across cannot be sacrificed. Even after crossing a person may not touch the river. All people and all equipment must end up on the other side of the river.

References

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American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance – www.aahperd.org

AAPAR – American Association for Physical Activity & Recreation – www.aahperd.org/aapar

NASPE – National Association for Sport & Physical Education – www.aahperd.org/naspe

Project Adventure – www.pa.org