

Problem Solvers / Ice Breakers / Team Builders / Cooperative Activities

1. **Frisbee Touch** - Begin with one frisbee for every five students. The object is to touch a frisbee that is on the floor, with your hand and not touch anyone else. When the music comes on, everyone moves to another frisbee and you begin eliminating frisbees. The goal should be forty to fifty students touching one frisbee. *The easiest way to do this, is if someone "solves the problem" and picks up the frisbee.

2. **Modified All-Aboard** - Using a poly spot, carpet rectangle, space station, etc. begin with two students per spot. The object is to have one foot on the spot and the other in the air. When the music is on everyone moves to a new spot, while each time spots are eliminated. The goal should be eight to twelve per spot (depending upon size). For a tighter fit, use a hula hoop, with the rule being *no* body parts out of the hoop. (Try combining different sizes and shapes of equipment.)

3. **Half of the Feet** - Students in groups of two, four or six; no equipment. The object is for the group to move across the area provided (about the width of a basketball court), using only half of the groups legs. (Examples: everyone in the group hops or three sets of wheelbarrows, or piggybacks, etc.) The group may continue to travel back and forth so long as they have new solutions each time. The goal is to make as many trips as possible.

5 Taggers
25 runners

4. **One vs Five Tag** - A large area needs to be divided in half, with side lines and end lines. Two teams are assigned to either side of the playing field. "The players", should be on one half, and have five times as many people as the taggers on the other half (the taggers need some type of designation, like pinnies or carrying a nerf ball, etc.) For example, if you have a class of sixty, there will be ten taggers and fifty "players". The object of the game, is for the players to make it to the opposite side of the floor without being tagged. If you make it, you walk up one side of the field (out of play) and tag the teacher on the side line to register your score. The player then starts back on their side and tries again. If tagged, you go to the other side line, perform a quick exercise (two sit-ups, two push-ups, four jumping jacks, etc.) and then return to your side to continue. The goal is to score as many as possible in one minute. After one minute, allow time to "strategize". Then each group will try to break the previous games record (taggers under the number, players over the mark).

could be pinnies

5. **The Web Site** - Two teams, evenly split, with one team having a jump rope (or jump band) per person (add more ropes/bands as they become more skillful). Team #1 (with bands) lines up in two lines facing each other. This team creates the "web" by holding the ropes across the middle in either straight lines or angles (from foot to hand or waist to above head, etc.). They should make it as tricky as possible with many levels covered. Team #2 must then travel through the web to the other side, *without* touching a band or rope.

6. **Redneck Interpretive Dance** - music: Dueling Banjos (from the movie "Deliverance") The first time through, have the teacher lead. The second time have students paired off, or in small groups, taking turns leading. The music lends itself to a "follow the leader" dance. This also

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Titanic

Playing Area: Large open area, grass is best!

Number of Players: Limited to the number of tarps you have.

Equipment Needed: 2 very large tarps, several small tarps (lifeboats), theme music from the movie, Titanic.

Skills: Cooperation, problem solving.

The objective of this initiative problem is to rescue your entire group from the sinking ship, "Titanic." The group must determine the most effective way to rescue all of the passengers and crew from the sinking boat.

Begin the activity by spreading out the large tarps. Place the tarps about 60 feet apart (twenty big steps). Have all the players sit on one of the large tarps. This will be the Titanic. Attach several small tarps to the large tarp. These small tarps will represent the lifeboats. The other large tarp will represent the rescue boat. Place a third tarp about half the distance between the two large tarps and off to the one side of the activity area. This does not have to be a large tarp. Players who touch the ground (fell in the chilling waters) will have to go and sit on this third tarp.

Explain to the players that the boat is sinking, but that a rescue boat awaits them in the distance. Start the music and let the players know that when the music stops playing the Titanic will be under water and any players in the lifeboats will be pulled down with the Titanic as she sinks. The goal is to save all players by putting them on board the rescue ship. Any player touching the ground (water) must sit on the tarp off to the side.

Reflective Questions:

- ◇ How did you decide which player to rescue first? Last? Why?
- ◇ What role did you play in the rescue attempt?
- ◇ What would you change about this activity and why?
- ◇ What resources could you use to obtain tarps?

Tarp Activities Bibliography

I first found tarp activities on a physical education list serve. I have since discovered that Charles "Chip" Candy presented tarp activities at Cal Poly several years ago. So... from a short list of tarp challenges, our students have been creating new challenges, or perhaps they are old, but with different names. The main point... "Just Do It!" and have fun :-)

Stage Diving

Playing Area: Large open area, grass is best!

Number of Players: Limited to the number of tarps you have. Lots of students around the edge of each tarp.

Equipment Needed: Small tarps, chair or some other type of platform.

Skills: Cooperation, trust building.

One student stands on a chair. The group holds the tarp at waist level. The student then dives into the air landing on the tarp. Try having the student turn around and fall into the tarp backward without looking. Make certain there are **lots** of students around the edge of the tarp.

Tarp Toss

Playing Area: Large open area, grass is best!

Number of Players: Limited to the number of tarps you have.

Equipment Needed: Small tarps, any type of ball or object that can be tossed into the air (except kids of course :-)

Skills: Cooperation.

Five or six students stand around the tarp, holding it at waist level. A object is placed in the middle of the tarp and tossed into the air by the group lifting the tarp up into air rapidly. One person from the group must try to catch the object before it touches the ground. Have a leader from each group call out a name just before the object leaves the tarp.

Variation: Toss the object high into the air and try to catch it again with the tarp. See how many catches can be made before a miss occurs.

Tarp Ball

Playing Area: Large open area, grass is best!

Number of Players: Limited to the number of tarps you have.

Equipment Needed: Large tarps, small tarps, volleyball net or other object that allows the ball to be tossed over, earthball, or small rubber ball or beanbag.

Skills: Cooperation, problem solving.

This activity is played by two separate teams attempting to toss a ball back and forth over a net, using a tarp. First, allow the teams to practice tossing and catching the ball without using a net. Once they are competent, then allow them to try and toss the ball over the net. How many times can they toss it back and forth over the net without allowing the ball to touch the ground?

- ◇ **Movement Themes:** Ask the students to use the tarps to show creative ways to express movement. Water, air, animals, and machines are some theme suggestions.
- ◇ Time for **The People Mover!** Each group will hold their tarp end to end with the other groups (waist level), forming a long conveyor belt. A brave person will then stand at one end of the belt. On signal, this person climbs onto the belt and begins to crawl, walk, roll or use any movement means to move along the conveyor. After the person has passed one segment of tarp, the people holding that tarp must run to the front of the conveyor and attach. This process continues until the person on the belt reaches a specified destination. If the belt person touches the ground, the entire group must return to the starting point and select a new brave person and begin again. Time the students and then encourage them to better their time. Ask the group to plan **prior** to starting the People Mover.

Hospital

Playing area: Large open space.

Players: Any number of players.

Equipment: 2 large tarps, one to represent the hospital, one to represent the crash scene, several small tarps that represent the ambulances.

Skills: Cooperation, problem solving.

Setup this activity by placing a large tarp (or four cones) at one end of the playing area. Setup the crash scene, the other large tarp about 20 or 25 paces from the hospital. Divide the players into groups of 5 - 8 and have each group sit on a small tarp (ambulance) next to the hospital.

To begin the challenge activity, have each group select one person to go over to the crash scene and lay down on the large tarp. The players are then challenged to rescue the crash scene victims in the shortest amount of time possible. They can pickup their ambulance, run to the scene, place a victim on the ambulance, carry the victim back to the hospital and place the victim on the hospital. The clock stops when all players are sitting on their ambulances and the victims are on or in the hospital.

I asked my students if they would like me to give them solutions to the challenges and one students said, "It's like playing the game of Hide and Seek, Mr. Vickroy. It wouldn't be any fun if you told us where everyone is hiding!"

Challenges: Students **are** allowed to touch the ground. Encourage the students to cooperate with other groups.

- ◇ Can your group make a **people sandwich**?
- ◇ Can your group make a **igloo** (no part of the body can be exposed to the freezing cold!)?
- ◇ Can your group use the tarp as a **stretcher** to rescue others? What type of activity can we create to rescue others?
- ◇ **Acid Rain** is in the forecast. Cover the entire class in a giant umbrella.
- ◇ We are going to create our own **Chinese New Year Dragons**. Let's start with small dragons and then create a giant dragon!
- ◇ **Musical Tarps**. When the music begins, all of you must skip, jog, bear walk, etc. around the outside of the tarps. When the music stops, you have 5 seconds to get on a tarp. I am going to take some tarps away, so tarps may become VERY crowded. I will continue taking tarps away until the entire class is together on 2 or 3 tarps.
- ◇ All students will stand on the floor holding the edge of the tarp. All **sit-down** together without letting go of the tarp. Now, try to **standup** together without letting go. If your group can do this, join with another group and tarp, repeat the challenge. Let's try the entire class, using all of the tarps together!
- ◇ Now, let's try something that is very active. Two tarp groups get together. Both groups will hold onto the edges of their own tarp. One group will go around the other group's tarp, three times. Then they will go over three times and then under three times. When this group is finished the other group repeats the challenge (3 times around, 3 times over and 3 times under). When both groups have finished, they can sit and rest on top of their tarp. Whew!

"Discovery consists of seeing what everybody has seen and thinking what nobody has thought."

-- Albert Szent-Gyorgyi {1893-1986 Nobel Laureate in Physiology}

“Tarp Time”

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Tarps come in many sizes. You could be creative and cut some tarps into different shapes. Use duct tape to make a new seam along the cut edge. Begin the cooperative challenges with several students standing on the tarp. I have used a 5' X 7' or 6' X 8' tarp with 4 - 6 students on each tarp.

Challenges: Students **are not** allowed to touch the ground with any body parts. They must stay on the tarp at all times.

- ◇ Stand on the bottom of the tarp (turn the tarp over without leaving it).
- ◇ Fold the tarp in half (1/2). Fold it in half again. One more time!!
- ◇ Shape the tarp into a diamond or triangle, or a house, cube etc.
- ◇ Magic Carpet -- How can you move the tarp across the floor?
- ◇ Cover as much of the tarp with your bodies as possible.
- ◇ Cover the least amount of the tarp as possible.

My heart is singing for joy this morning.
A miracle has happened! The light of
understanding has shown upon my little pupil's
mind, and behold, all things are changed.

-- Anne Sullivan

Tarp
Activities
&
Cooperative
Games