

Name/Title: The Human Square

Purpose of Event: An excellent preassessment, formative, or summative assessment task for cooperative games.

Prerequisites: Class discussions, team building activities, adventure challenge type tasks

Suggested Grade Level: 3-5

Materials Needed: Blindfolds, pencils, [Assessment Sheet](#)

Description of Idea

PYP PE: Adventure Challenge Task (any grades 4-high school)

If you are currently planning an Adventure Challenge unit, I hope that you may find this task useful. It worked well with my students when we completed the task here at the Nanjing International School in China during my adventure challenge unit.

The central idea for the Adventure Challenge unit is:

Effectively solving problems requires communication, trust, and an open mind.

The activity that I planned for my group was called The Human Square. I have done versions of this activity many times before and it has generally worked very well.

How to play:

Every student (with exception of two or three who will act as observers) will be blindfolded and spread out around the gym. Stressing safety as being most important, the students are instructed to carefully and gently make their way into the center of the gym (or there about) and meet.

Once all students have met around the center, they must figure out how they can create a human square formation that requires everyone to lay on the ground/floor. They are to remain blindfolded the entire time. Communication is emphasized as one of the keys to being successful in this challenge.

It will no doubt take them a while to accomplish this task, but as teachers, we must let them figure out how to do this on their own and try our best not to get involved. If safety is at stake or total meltdown occurs, the teacher must step in to help. Otherwise, **THEY CAN DO IT!!!** (I have rarely had a class not be able to complete this task.)

The role of the Observers

Choosing observers is very important as well. The role of the observers is to watch thoughtfully

and carefully, noting on paper both positive behaviors that help the team or negative actions that hurt the team. They are instructed to look for examples of trustful/non-trustful actions, positive and negative communication, and examples of people being open-minded during the activity.

At the end of the activity, the observers provide feedback to the group based on what they had witnessed. However, the golden rule that I use for the observers is that they are not allowed to mention a student's name if they are feeding back anything negative. If the comments are positive, a student's name can be used, but not for negative comments.

Assessment Task

Please click below for the assessment task. Essentially, the students must reflect on the activity and jot some notes down regarding how they think Trust, Communication, and an Open Mind played large roles in this activity.

[Assessment Sheet](#)

Please visit [this site](#) to see slide show of each step of the activity and student assessment.

Assessment Ideas:

Students must jot down notes on an assessment sheet which is provided and discussed ahead of time. As trust is essential, this activity allows students to reflect on their own actions and the actions of their group members.

Submitted by **Andy Vasily** who teaches at Nanjing International School in nanjing, WY. Thanks for contributing to PE Central! **Posted on PEC: 5/20/2012.**

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