

Name/Title: Forming Groups and/or Teams

Purpose of Event: To share various ideas on how to go about forming groups and/or teams in physical education class.

Suggested Grade Level: K-12

Description of Idea

No need to have "boys vs. girls" or "picking teams" anymore in our PE classes. These ideas should provide developmentally appropriate ideas to get students into groups of your liking.

1. Standers and Sitters (forming 2 teams)

Have everyone get a partner. Have one person sit and the other stand. Standers move to a teacher designated area and they form one team. Sitters become a team. Typically this eliminates best buddies and the higher and lower skilled being on the same team all of the time.

2. Group Face (forming small groups)

Have the kids move around in general space doing whatever you want them to do (skipping, jogging, etc.). When you call out a number, that is the size of the group the students they have to get into (i.e., "4" is called, so the teacher should see groups of 4). (Use math equations if you want i.e., $4-2+7=??$). Call out several numbers or equations until you are happy with the groups that are formed.

Have groups that are unable to form that numbered group come to you. Typically on they're way to see you they find other groups having the same problem and they make the correct numbered group.

3. Interlocking Grip (forming two teams)

Have students close their eyes and then put their hands together so their fingers are interlocking and their palms are touching each other. Have them open their eyes and look down at their hands. If their right thumb is on top then they are one team and if their left thumb is on top then they go to the other team.

4. Birthday Groups (forming small groups)

Have students form groups by their birthdays. If you were born in January go to the teacher designated area, February goes here, etc. To form larger teams you can ask them to get into groups if you born from January to March, April to July, etc.

5. Seasons (forming into 4 groups)

All children born in the Spring form one group; all born in the Winter form another team, and so on.

6. Birds of a Feather (forming small groups)

Give each student a card with a different kind of bird drawn and/or picture on it. Students are to find the person(s) with the bird that matches theirs. Of course you can use any category for this (i.e., dogs, cars, sports topics).

7. Take a Number (forming small groups)

Ask the children to quickly get into groups of 3, 4, 5 etc. Break up the groups by having the children take a number from one to _____ depending on the number of students in the group. Ones form a group, Twos form a group, etc. This usually breaks up the skilled players and the students end up working with new classmates.

8. Back To Back (forming two teams)

Have students stand back-to-back with a partner (give them no longer than 10 seconds). Use the following options for forming groups:

1. Have the younger of the two go to a designated area.
2. Have the student with the larger or smaller foot size go to a designated area.
3. Have the taller or shorter student go to a designated area.

9. Every Other Student (forming 2 teams)

Have the girl's line up in front of you and boys behind you (or vice versa). Walk down the line and tap every other student and have them raise their hand. Hands up students are one team, hands down the other. You know have an equal number of boys and girls on each team.

10. Hair Bands (forming different sized groups)

On the days that you need to form groups/teams give students small hair bands to wear on their wrists (they fit perfectly). Have 4-6 colors so then you can divide the class up anyway that you need to. You can group students differently each week by giving out different colors to different students. You can use for skill practice as well (i.e., yellow bands dribble around the yellow hoop, orange bands assess their skill by writing the cues they perform).

11. Teacher Formed Groups (forming different sized groups)

One of the best methods to form equal groups and teams is to have the teacher make them up in advance. The teacher's knowledge of skill, gender, behavior, and compatibility of their own students is probably the best way to form the groups. For example, If you are doing stations list the names of the students on a card, give the group a name, and then have the students go to that

station to start. Change groups frequently throughout the year.

12. Deck Of Cards

Make a pack of playing sized cards with the names of your students on them. The teacher shuffles the cards and the student's names are called as they are pulled from the pack. If you want just one child, you can choose a child to pick a card, or shuffle them and pick the top one. This is random selection and avoids anyone feeling "bad" about being last or not picked. Ideal if you want any amount of groups as each 3 or 4 cards are turned over they become a group.

13. Everyday Questions (forming 2 groups)

"If you put both socks on before your shoes (sneakers), then you go to this side. If you put one sock and shoe on before the other then move over here."

"If you get out of bed on the left side, then you are over here. If you are a right sider, then you are on this side"

14. Hands Up and Down (forming 2 groups)

Have children line up along the middle line of the gym. Move past the students and as you do indicate if they should put their hand up or leave it down (i.e., say up, down, up, up, down etc.). The ups then form one team and the downs form another.

15. Equipment Fun/Forming Groups (forming small groups)

Spread the pairs of equipment throughout the playing area. Have students enter the gym and pick up any piece of equipment. Have them start playing with the piece of equipment in a creative and safe manner and they should stay close to their personal space area. After about 3-4 minutes, form teams/partners by instructing the student to find the student with the matching piece of equipment. Combine equipment for fast groups of four (i.e., "all bean bags and nerf balls skip to the red line.")

16. Deck of Cards (Part II) (forming small groups)

Decide how many groups you want and what size. For example, if you would like to have 5 groups of 5 and you wanted to randomly put them into groups then get 5 Kings, 5 Aces, 5 2's, 5 Jacks, and 5 Queens (of course you will need more than one deck of cards) and shuffle them up. Pass them out and match up the five who get the Kings, Queens, etc. Those will be their groups for the day/period.

17. First Names (forming partners)

Have children count the number of letters in their first name. Now ask them to find someone in the class who has the same number of letters. Those two are now partners. If a child can't find someone ask him/her what other name he is called by (i.e., a student named Matthew may use

the name Matt and then he may look for someone with 4 letters instead of 7). If they still can't find someone then have the children come to you so you can pair them up.

ADVANTAGE: Now that they are in pairs I wanted one partner to get a balloon. They had to figure out whose name started with the letter closest to A. That child went to get the balloon. I tried this with my first graders and they loved it. It was great seeing them talking with one another to find a partner.

18. Barnyard (forming small groups)

Students are each given one tongue depressor marked with the name of an animal (i.e., cow, pig, chicken, horse, etc.). (The number of different animals used depends on how many groups you want to form. For example, for a class of 30 ending in groups of six, use 5 different animals.) On signal and staying within a marked boundary, students begin to move around general space using a teacher determined locomotor movement (slow movements work best). While students are moving around they are to make the sound of the animal on their tongue depressor. Students "look" (listen) for anyone of the same animal category and hook up with them. Continue moving through space until all of your animal buddies have been found and are all together. Students should keep their tongue depressors in their hand but they shouldn't show it to anyone. Do not allow "human" communication for this activity and it is best to tell students to make the animal noises using a soft voice.

19. Standers and Sitters: Part II (forming small groups)

Have students find someone who has the same size hand or shoe size and have them sit by each other. After all students have grouped together have one person stand. All students standing are on one team those sitting down are on the other.

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Submitted by **Mark Manross** in Blacksburg, VA. Thanks for contributing to PE Central! **Posted on PEC: 5/22/2012.**

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