

Name/Title: Amazon Crossing

Purpose of Event: The purpose of this activity is for students to practice and use cooperation, communication and problem solving skills.

Prerequisites: Students need to be comfortable in waist deep water and should be able to demonstrate basic swimming strokes to safely travel the length of the pool.

Suggested Grade Level: 6-12

Materials Needed:

- 1 swimming pool
- 1 4x8 foam mat (a small piece of a wrestling mat works great) for each team.
- 3 jump ropes for each team.
- 2 kickboards for each team.
- 1 medicine ball for each team.

Description of Idea

Students are divided into teams of 6-12. The object is to get the entire team across the Piranha infested Amazon River using the equipment provided. All students must have at least 75% of their body on the mat while traveling across the "river". Students are told that they may not use their hands or feet to paddle in the water (this is where the kick boards and jump ropes are used). The students must also bring over a very fragile cargo (the medicine ball). I have my students either keep the ball dry, or tell them they need to keep two hands on the ball at all times. If any equipment is dropped in the water, it sinks and is lost for the game. If the cargo is not handled, the entire group starts over. If anyone falls in (and is eaten), the group starts over.

Assessment Ideas:

The lesson usually takes about 20-25 min. total. After the task is completed (either with or without success), I sit the students down and we discuss other ways to solve the problem. For example, how they can work together, etc... The following day, I let them attempt the challenge again. Usually they are successful.

Teaching Suggestions:

You must have a lifeguard watching. I also suggest that the teacher is in the pool with the groups.

Submitted by **Henry J. Carney II** who teaches at Veronica E. Connor Middle School in Grand Island, NY.
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