Name/Title: The Bus

Purpose of Event: To help students cooperate when completing physical challenges.

Suggested Grade Level: 3-5

Materials Needed: One or more large (high jump size) mats

Description of Idea

Let students know they will need to be cooperating together in order to complete the day's activities. Their purpose will be to work together in order to move a large mat around the gymnasium (or teaching area). Discuss what it means to cooperate: working together nicely...looking out for others...helping others...talking nicely with others.

Remind students that there are some important **safety concerns** involved with this activity. They especially need to remember that they are to move at the same speed as everyone else in their group. If they go too fast, they can cause other people -- and the mat -- to fall, and people might get hurt. They need to think of others and not "horse play", as others again can get hurt. Also, remind them they need to lift and put the mat down together. Suggest that each group designate one person as the "**captain** ", who leads (by counting) when the mat should be picked up and put down.

Divide students into groups around each mat (try not to have too many at one mat, for safety reasons; perhaps half the group at one mat). Present the following challenges (mats are on the ground when you explain all challenges) and have students try them after you've finished explaining each, answering any questions as needed. If needed, stop the activity and discuss the kinds of behaviors that are helpful -- and hurtful -- to a group working together.

Challenge 1) Lifting the mat : Students lift the mat together, then bring it back down to the floor (quietly) at the same time. You may decide to verbally "count" to cue students to lift it the first time, and then allow the "captain" to count after that. Remind students to lift it only to a point where they are able to see over the mat.

Challenge 2) The drop : Students lift the mat. At your signal, they drop it at the same time. Remind them to move backward out of the way when they drop it! If they all do it at the same time, it will make a big boom! (Not necessarily fun for you to hear it, but the kids will love it!) Again, you may want to verbally count for them to do it the first time, then allow the captain to give the cues to drop it after that.

Challenge 3) The drive around : Students lift the mat and walk around the gym while holding it up (again, not higher than they can see over it). Give students direction to turn: straight, turn left, turn right, U-turn, backward, etc.

Challenge 4) The pick up : Have a few students spread around the gym. A group with a mat comes over to "pick up" each child. The group must drop the mat, the student lays on the mat, and the group up must pick the mat back up. Stress the safety! It is important that the student on the mat lies without moving, and that the group brings the mat to the floor safely without dropping it. Be sure not to pick up more than two students at a time.

Challenge 5) The 360 : Students turn the mat 360 in one, then the other, direction.

Challenge 6) The tow truck : While half the class lifts the mat up, the other half goes under the mat on the hands and knees, all facing the same direction. The mat is gently brought down onto the students backs, who then must move the mat to the "garage" (sideline) without dropping it.

When done, review the types of behaviors which were positively used to cooperate.

Variations:

Smaller mats may be used with lesser number of students.

Stress the safety aspect to students. Don't hesitate to stop a group which is having difficulty cooperating.

Assessment Ideas:

Ask students to complete a small sheet detailing how their group worked together by coloring in the "smile" face for "good"; "so-so" face for "OK"; "frowny" face for "not so good". Have them write at least one reason for their rating.

Submitted by **Marie-Jose DeGagne** who teaches at Jean-Leman School in Candiac, Quebec, Canada. , .
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