

No Trees? No Problem: Outdoor activities you can run in any school yard

Workshop presented by Hannah and Heather Dabrowski at the Council of Outdoor Educators Conference on September 23, 2023 at Camp Couchiching

Activities:

UBUNTU TPOT (that person over there)

- Choose a UBUNTU card that relates to your work. It can be a physical connection or a metaphorical connection.
- Once you've chosen a card, find a partner and share your name and why you chose your card. Your partner will do the same. Then switch cards. The name and story stays with the card so you'll find someone else and describe the card that you have. If you see someone with your card, let them know that you'd like to talk to them later but not right now (to avoid getting your card back).

Curriculum connection:

- We discussed using this as a less intense way to get to know people's names - instead of standing in a circle hearing everyone's name. Oftentimes people are too anxious about when they need to talk that they don't listen to other people's names.

Evolution (egg, chicken, pterodactyl, t-rex, superhero)

- Everyone starts as an egg (the action is to be curled up in a ball) and then they play rock, paper, scissors with another egg. The winner evolves into a chicken. The egg stays an egg. The chicken can only play with other chickens and the winner evolves into a pterodactyl. The loser of the chicken vs chicken activity devolves into an egg. After pterodactyl is t-rex and then superhero. Superheroes can still play other superheroes but the winner remains a superhero and the loser devolves into a t-rex.

Curriculum connection:

- This evolution game could be used to learn about the life cycle of various creatures such as the frog lifecycle or the caterpillar life cycle in the younger grades. It could also be used for the mitosis or meiosis processes in the highschool grades (evolution of a cell or micro-organism).
- Some participants also mentioned using this in numerous rounds to discuss probability. The goal could be to create a graph of the results as a fun way to learn about graphing and math..

Poison ivy and jewelweed

- We started with a brief description of jewelweed and how the oil of it can help poison ivy rashes.
- Each person chooses one person to be their "poison ivy" but they don't share who it is out loud. They choose a different person to be their "jewelweed" and keep it to themselves as well. Everyone's goal is to have their jewelweed in between their poison ivy and themselves. Everyone ends up running around at the same time and chaos ensues.

Curriculum connection:

- A similar game could be played where someone chooses a person to be their “sun” and “moon” and the person is the earth. This could help encourage discussion around eclipses. There is a unit on astronomy and planets in the grade 10 Science curriculum.

Partner sequence (add 'em up, 7th heaven, who are you, finger jousting, celebration high fives)

- The group finds a partner and stands in the circle beside their partner. One partner steps into the circle and turns to face their partner. We made two concentric circles.
- The first mini game was add 'em up:
 - Each partner starts with one hand behind their back and on the count of three brings it in front of them. The person to add up all the fingers the fastest wins.
- Curriculum connection
 - There are some obvious math connections. We discussed being able to have students multiply the numbers, or subtract numbers.
- The second mini game was 7th heaven:
 - Similar to add 'em up, 7th heaven involves both members trying to have their fingers equal 7. The team members cannot communicate about which number they're going to put out and they cannot put the same number two times in a row.
- Curriculum connection
 - Collaboration and working together could be a curriculum connection.
 - It's also an activity that you could use to discuss different styles of communication
 - Strategy (no one should put the number 1 out because it can never equal 7)
 - If changing it to add up to 10, this could be used to make the 'friendly numbers' and practice making 10 (ie 4 and 6 are 'friendly numbers' of 10)
- The third mini game was who are you:
 - One partner asks the same question five times to their partner. The question is, 'who are you?' The partner should answer with one word answers. Example answers could be teacher, daughter, hiker, Canadian etc.
- Curriculum connection
 - A good activity for identity.
 - We discussed having an animal in mind and when the person asks who are you?, the other person shares a trait or description of the animal. The second partner must try and guess what animal they were thinking of after 5 questions.
 - One partner says 'type of bird, who are you?' The other partner must share five different types of birds.
- The fourth mini game was finger jousting:
 - Partners stand with their front foot touching each other and their back foot in a sturdy stance. They grip hands around the thumbs and point their pointer finger forwards. The object of the game is to touch the other person's shoulder or calf with your finger joust. They are trying to do the same to you. For round two, you can try using your non dominant hand.
- Curriculum connection

- Utilizing gross motor skills, physical education and balance.
- Quick reminder about winning and losing.
- A safe activity to use energy (instead of wrestling or play fighting)
- The fifth mini game was to create a celebration high five:
 - With one partner, create a three move handshake. It can be as creative as you'd like. Now go back to your original partner from the very beginning. Each person will share the three move handshake that they just created and then add an additional move to make a 7 move handshake.
- Curriculum connection
 - Creating individual connections with another student
 - Can be fun to bring back when introducing other activities, like "ok, before we start (this activity), find your partner and do your celebration high 5.
 - Fun!
- **Curriculum connection for partner sequence as a whole:**
 - Start by letting them choose a partner
 - Concentric circles are an easy, low risk way for people to find new partners. And the activities are short enough that they can be with a new person for 1 minute.
 - Start with simple activities (add 'em up) to ease people into it. I didn't start with finger jousting, asking people to grab other people's hands right away.
 - Let them go back to their original partner (usually a friend) to make their celebration high 5.

Multiverse Mirror

- This activity works best in groups of 3-7 people. There are three roles: seer, runner, builder. The group decides who they want in each role. The seers may look at a statue made out of random objects. They are the only members of the group who can see the statue. They then pass that information off to the runner. The runner takes the information to the builder who tries to recreate the statue. The builder is the only one who can touch the building materials. (Every group receives the same materials that make up the statue). The builder may not talk. Ensure that the builder is constructing in a place where the seer cannot see them.

Curriculum Connection

- This activity can lead very easily into discussing different styles of communication.
- Another reflection could be about teamwork and everyone having different roles, but all the roles being necessary for success.
- The statue could be something related to the curriculum (ie parts of a cell or colours of a rainbow or planets in the solar system).