

Polar-ICE Sci-I Project

Team building and communication initiatives:

- **Helium hula hoop/sticks** (4-8 people per group; props needed = hula hoop/long light stick...we used glacier markers)
 - The object of this exercise is to lower the object to the ground. And there are only 2 rules for this challenge:
 - Rule #1 – Only the end of your pointer finger can touch the hoop. Note, no hooking your fingers around the hoop. (Your palms need to be facing up towards the sky.)
 - Rule #2 – Everyone's fingers (both of them, aka one pointer finger from each hand) must be touching the object at all times.
 - *Debrief Questions:*
 - What was surprising to you about how this challenge played out?
 - What can you take away from this experience in terms of your role in effectively working on a team towards a similar goal?

Other options we could have done...

- **Straw Challenge** (5-12 people per group; props needed = n/a)
 - Stand in a circle. Each person gets a straw and they should hold it against their right pointer finger.
 - Cross your left arm across your right arm and press the tip of your left pointer finger onto the end of your neighbor's straw. Note, nothing but pointer fingers can be touching the straw.
 - The objective is to do a series of moves as a group without any straw dropping:
 - Move in a circle to their left until they are back in their original position again
 - Move 5-15 feet (depending on how much space you have) in a direction from where they are standing, and then return to their original location.
 - Jump up and down 3 times.
 - *Debrief Questions:*
 - How did your neighbor's movement affect yours?
 - Were you affected by movement across the circle?
 - In our group, how do we affect each other?
- **Whomp'em** (8-12 people per group; props needed = ½ pool noodle)
 - Sit in a circle with your legs straight in towards the middle.
 - One volunteer starts standing up with the noodle in the middle.
 - A different person in the circle begins by saying his/her name and then the name of someone else in the circle.
 - This passes the "turn" to them. They must then say their name and someone else's to pass the "turn" before the person in the middle "whomps 'em" with the noodle.

Polar-ICE Sci-I Project

- Instruct the person in the middle to only whomp people's feet.
- *Debrief Questions:*
 - Why is it important for everyone in a group to know each other?
 - How as facilitators in our classroom can we support this kind of fundamental connection among group members?
- **You know I love you baby, but I just can't smile** (5-20+ people per group; props needed = n/a)
 - Everybody stands in a circle. One person is chosen to be "it."
 - They stand in the middle of the circle and approach another person to say "I love you, baby" and they have to respond with "You know I love you baby, but I just can't smile."
 - If they smile while replying, they lose and become "it."
 - If they manage to keep a straight face, the "it" person in the circle center has to move onto another person to try.
 - "It" isn't allowed to touch anyone, but anything else is fair game (the more dramatic the better).
 - *Debrief Questions:*
 - What is a benefit of doing such a silly communication activity?
 - What was going through your mind as you tried to respond without smiling? When you were trying to get someone to smile? When you were watching others talk to one another?
- **All Aboard** (6-10 people per group; props needed = tarp, blanket, or circle of rope)
 - The challenge is for the whole group to try to fit inside the "boat."
 - You are going to need to feel get physically close and be supportive of one another, so do what you need to do to feel physically comfortable in this challenge.
 - When the group succeeds, decrease the area (e.g., shrinking the circle, or folding the tarp) and challenge the group again.
 - *Debrief Questions:*
 - How did your approach to the challenge change over time? Why?
 - In a group, how do our actions affect the group when things become hard?
- **Magic Carpet** (6-10 people per group; props needed = tarp about 5 feet x 5 feet)
 - Everyone needs to stand on top of the "magic carpet."
 - Now you need to flip the tarp over without anyone touching the ground, as you are up flying in the air.
 - *Debrief Questions:*
 - What helped your team collaborate most successfully?
 - In a group, how does communication impact how well we collaborate?