

What are problem-solving initiative games?

Here you will find fun, cooperative, and challenging games for a group, with a specific problem to solve. The purpose of these games:

- Demonstrate and teach the skills of leadership
- Demonstrate a thought process about experiences which helps students become responsible, cooperative adults

For the teacher as facilitator:

Begin by clearly explaining the game.

Make sure the rules are understood.

ALL students must complete the activity for the group to be successful.

As teacher/facilitator, do not offer ideas for solving the problem. Stand back and let the group work.

The only time a teacher should interfere is if something is unsafe, OR the group has clearly fallen apart.

Reflect on the activity afterward with students, what they learned from the activity.

- Ask open-ended questions
- How effectively they accomplished the task
- How well they got along with each other
- Ask them to decide if what happened was good or bad
- Lastly, have students set goals for the next problem-solving game

Radioactive Field

Materials: 3 boards (pieces of plywood about 1 foot square)

The goal is to transfer the entire group across an open, flat area using three “protective shields” without touching the ground with any body part. Boards cannot be thrown across the open area.

Magic Boots

The goal is to transfer the entire group across an open area using one pair of Magic Boots. No body part can touch the ground except for feet wearing the Magic Boots. The boots CANNOT be thrown across the field. They CAN be carried. Each foot on each person can only wear a boot safely for ONE trip across. After that foot is used, it cannot be used for any more trips.

Blind Tent Pitch

Materials: One tent with all equipment needed to set it up. Blindfolds for all participants.

The goal is to set up the tent with everybody in the group blindfolded.

All Aboard

Materials: An old towel or rag or pre-built platform about 2 feet by 2 feet.

The goal is to get everyone in the group to stand on the towel or platform without touching the ground around it. Start with the towel unfolded and gradually increase the challenge by folding it smaller and smaller. The one restriction: you cannot “stack” more than one person on another.

Quicksand

Materials: platform such as in above or a towel. Also, 2 Frisbee-sized discs to step on.

Place the platform or towel about six giant steps away from a boundary line. The goal is to get everyone from behind the boundary line across the open area onto the platform without touching the ground. The discs can be used to cross the area, but once they are placed on the ground, they CANNOT be moved. Also, someone's foot must be on the disc at all times until the last person crosses.

Reversing Pyramid

Have 10 people form a 4-3-2-1 horizontal pyramid (set up like bowling pins). Tell them to reverse the apex and the base of the pyramid by moving only three people.

The Great Egg Drop

Materials: 20 straws, and 30" of ½-inch masking tape.

The goal is to build a structure that will prevent an egg from breaking when it is dropped from a height of 8 feet.

References:

Rohnke, Karl. The Bottomless Bag; Silver Bullets,1988. Wilkscraft Creative Printing
Orlick, Terry. The Second Cooperative Sports and Games Book. 1982. Pantheon Books.
Fluegelman, Andrew. The New Games Book; More New Games. 1981. Doubleday.