



Commission scolaire English-Montréal
English Montreal School Board

Forts, Fun and Fairplay: Building Teamwork and Communication Skills in the Winter Outdoors

A Mini Learning and Evaluation Situation
to Develop Competency 2

Cycle 2 Elementary



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Introduction

The objective of this LES is to develop elements of competency 2 while teaching outdoors in the winter. The activities are designed to be done in the schoolyard and do not require winter sport equipment like skis, snowshoes, etc.

More specifically, this LES focuses on developing three elements of Competency 2 - communication skills, an understanding of the different roles that team members play in cooperative situations, and ethical and fair play behaviors (see following page for specific progressions of learning). All of the suggested activities are designed to require students to practice the skills related to these elements, reflect on their teams' success and challenges as well as their own individual progress.

Class Teams

All of the activities presented throughout this LES are in the form of small-group team challenges. In order to achieve the above-mentioned objectives, it is recommended to place students in teams at the beginning of the unit **and have them remain in these teams throughout the unit.** Doing so allows students to get a sense of the team dynamics that they will be working within as well as the opportunity to become comfortable with their teammates. This provides a richer learning environment for students to apply teamwork skills, reflect on the successes and challenges of their team and monitor their progress as a group.

The "X" Factor - Snow and Winter Weather

Given the unpredictable nature of winter weather, this resource is presented with flexibility in mind. Each of the 8 activity challenges target the same learning objectives - that students are required to communicate with each other, cooperate, strategize, take on different roles, show respect for the contributions of teammates, etc. **As such, it is left up to each teacher to decide which challenge is the most appropriate for a given day depending on snow conditions, weather, equipment available, length of class, etc.** All the challenges include suggestions for variations and modifications. For certain challenges, the type of snow on the ground (i.e. fluffy, sticky, etc.) may significantly impact the end result of the task (what the students are able to create or achieve). Teachers are encouraged to highlight this in discussion with students, and invite students to see any challenges posed by the snow conditions as an opportunity to discuss as a team and strategize. In fact, given that a main objective of this LES is to develop communication and cooperation skills, challenging snow conditions that force teams to communicate and strategize may in fact lend itself to the intended outcome.

Length of LES

The suggested minimum number of classes for this LES is four classes. This will provide students multiple opportunities to work with their teammates, reflect on their performance in each

challenge and see progress. However, 8 different activity challenges have been provided so if time and conditions permit, teachers may wish to extend beyond four classes.

Additionally, if adverse weather conditions force classes to take place inside, there is nothing preventing the flow of this unit from continuing- students can continue to participate in team-building challenges in an indoor setting and engage in reflection on their performance in the same manner. See this [cooperative team challenge card](#) from OpenPhysEd.org or these [team building challenges from Gopher](#) for ideas of indoor team challenges.

Targeted Progressions of Learning

Principles Of Communication	Names a few ways of being understood by others (e.g. making eye contact, giving a signal, asking a question)
	Names a few ways of being receptive to others' messages (e.g. listening without interrupting, looking at the person who is speaking)
Methods Of Communication	Names different ways of communicating (e.g. calling out someone's name, using a hand signal)
Roles	Explains in his/her own words the main actions of a team captain or leader (e.g. calling a play, rounding up his/her teammates)
	Distinguishes the main types of support roles (e.g. scorekeeper, timekeeper, referee) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Additional note for winter unit: support roles as a group member- participant, encourager, leader, etc.</i>
Ethics-Related Aspects	Explains in his/her own words the rules of ethics relevant to a situation (e.g. in a tag and chase game, refraining from using unfair tactics to win at all costs)
	Names a few values that can be developed through games and sports (e.g. respect, friendship, honesty)
	Respects his/her peers (partners and opponents):
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses language that shows respect for his/her partner/team members
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheers on his/her partners
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respects the point of view or ideas of others
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepts the mistakes of teammates
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps partners who are having difficulty
	Observes the rules
	Demonstrates fairness:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives everyone a chance to play (e.g. gives others a chance to get the object)
	Shows appreciation for good plays by peers:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows appreciation for the plays of his/her partner
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows appreciation for the plays of his/her teammates and opponents
	Demonstrates honesty in his/her behaviour
	Demonstrates dignity and self-control

A Note on the End-of-Cycle Outcome:

The Progressions of Learning is a practical curriculum document to work with because of how specific they are, but they are intended to serve more as a guide than as concrete learning targets. Rather, the End-of-Cycle Outcome for each Competency is the established (and much more general) learning target for students at the end of each cycle.

The Competency 2 End-of-Cycle Outcome for Cycle 2 students emphasizes the following:

- That students can plan cooperation and opposition strategies with one or more peer(s)
- That they can factor in their own and others strengths and difficulties in creating a plan with others.
- That they are aware of and can apply the relevant ethical considerations in any given situation.
- They know how to verbally or non-verbally communicate a message as called for by the situation.
- They can reflect on their process- what worked and what didn't- and participate in efforts to find solutions.

The activities in this LES are presented with these features of the end-of-cycle outcome in mind. More specifically, the discussion/reflection questions for each activity are intended to move students forward in their thinking and ability to achieve this end-of-cycle outcome. The evaluation grid provided to teachers is aligned to the end-of-cycle outcome.

Evaluation

A teacher evaluation grid is provided to accompany this LES ([view the evaluation grid here](#)). Each one of the columns on the grid represents an “observable element” – actions/behaviors that teachers can observe in students as they complete the various team challenges. Although teacher observations naturally occur every class, teachers should try to base the majority of their formal observations on the classes towards the end of the unit – this will give students time to absorb and learn from the reflection discussions and practice opportunities. It is up to each teacher to decide how many observable elements they wish to include in the evaluation. To aid with judgement for each observable element, teachers can use this [four-point rubric](#) . Note that this rubric is generic to all observable elements for Competency 2 – only certain ones apply to this LES.

A few other notes related to evaluation:

- Because this is a mini-unit and one taking place outdoors, teams are not being asked to provide/submit any Plans of Action in writing (whereas in a full-length LES, a written or plan would be asked of students).

- To support student learning throughout the LES and encourage individual reflection, different self-assessment activities are suggested.
- Evidently, due to the nature of this LES (length, outdoor setting, etc.) and the selected learning objectives, evaluation relies heavily on teacher professional judgment. That said, with the use of the evaluation grid, teachers can feel confident in having clearly defined learning objectives that are guiding their observations.

Suggested four-class outline (approximate 45 – 60 minutes per class):

Notes:

- Ensure adequate class time for discussion/reflection – this is critical to achieving the learning objectives of this unit.
- This outline assumes that discussions/reminders on dressing appropriately for winter have taken place prior to the first class.

Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
<p>BEFORE GOING OUTSIDE</p> <p>1) Presentation of unit – introduce focus (learning objectives) of the unit</p> <p>2) Teams - place students in their teams (they will remain in these groups for the duration of the unit).</p> <p>3) Q & A – 1) discuss the different roles (i.e. ways to contribute) that members of any given group may have (see following section for ideas) 2) ask students to share what qualities/behaviours make a good teammate or group member. Invite them to individually reflect on these qualities, think about their own strengths and weaknesses in relation to these qualities, and set a goal for themselves for the unit. <i>Option</i>– have them write down their goal.</p> <p>OUTSIDE:</p> <p>4) Team Cheer – in order to help foster a sense of</p>	<p>OUTSIDE</p> <p>1) Team Cheer. Have teams perform their team cheer to start class. <i>Optional if your class is into it:</i> have them develop a team handshake (COVID-19 consideration: use boot taps instead of hand touching.).</p> <p>2) Team Challenge Activity</p> <p>3) Debrief/Reflection</p> <p><i>(complete 1 or 2 Team Challenges depending on class duration & length of time the challenge takes).</i></p> <p>4) Self-Reflection & Evaluation – ask students to think back to the goal they set for themselves for the unit. Do they feel</p>	<p>OUTSIDE</p> <p>1) Team Warm-Up – give each team 10 minutes to create a warm-up routine/sequence. Encourage them to use the schoolyard terrain/whatever is (safely) available to them.</p> <p>2) Explanation: Coach for a Day. Within their teams, assign students a partner. The partners are each others’ “coach” – they will be responsible for observing their partner in action during activities and providing feedback to each other at the end of class. The feedback should focus on how their partner has performed in</p>	<p>OUTSIDE</p> <p>1) Team Cheer & Hand/ Footshake</p> <p>2) Team Challenge Activity</p> <p>3) Debrief/Reflection</p> <p><i>(complete 1 or 2 Team Challenges depending on class duration & length of time the challenge takes).</i></p> <p>4) Unit Wrap-up Discussion.</p> <p>5) Optional - Individual Reflection: if paper/pencils are an option once back indoors, students could fill this End of Unit Reflection. You</p>

<p>cohesiveness/community in the teams that students have been assigned, give teams 5 minutes to create a team cheer. Bonus points if there's choreography that includes snow or positive messages about winter. Have each team perform their cheer for the other groups.</p> <p>5) 1st Team Challenge- choose from one of the 8 team challenges provided.</p> <p>6) Debrief/Reflection – leave adequate time at the end of class to debrief the activity with students (see reflection questions provided for the activity)</p> <p>7) Shout-outs (end of class activity): ask students if anyone wants to give a “shout-out” to another student for something positive they saw or heard that person do that day. Students share the name of their classmate and what the classmate did (note: there can be a wide variety of reasons that students give shout-outs...teachers can choose to give parameters for the shout out if they wish, i.e. have it relate to the objectives of the class/unit).</p>	<p>they are succeeding at achieving their goal? Remind students of the objectives of the unit (communication skills, taking on different roles, fair play/cooperation skills). If the weather permits students taking off their mitts/gloves for a moment, ask students to close their eyes and raise their arm to show you between 1 and 5 fingers (5 = doing really well regarding goal/unit objectives, 1 = needs to improve).</p> <p>Option: if paper/pencils are an option once back indoors, students could fill this Self-Assessment: Being a Good Teammate.</p> <p>5) Shout-outs</p>	<p>relation to the unit objectives – communication, roles, and fair play. Students should notice at least one positive thing their partner has done as well as a suggestion for how they can improve. Try to convey to students the responsibility involved in providing feedback (words matter!). If a class is not working at a level where this activity could be a constructive learning experience, then skip it.</p> <p>3) Team Challenge Activity</p> <p>4) Debrief/Reflection <i>(complete 1 or 2 Team Challenges depending on class duration & length of time the challenge takes).</i></p> <p>5) Shout-outs</p>	<p>can also access this reflection in Google Forms here (you will be prompted to make a copy).</p>
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Different Roles in Team Building Challenges

A focus of this LES is encouraging students to reflect on the different ways they can contribute to their teams' success. As most people have experienced, in any given group situation, if too many people play the role of the group leader/director, nothing gets accomplished efficiently. Take time during the first class to discuss the different roles that group members might play and the importance of each role. These roles don't have to be ones that are typically formally assigned, but the discussion can help students recognize and value the different ways that each person may contribute. Some roles discussed might include:

- group leader - the person who verbalizes the task ahead and invites group members to contribute their ideas
- contributor - someone who participates to the best of their ability, contributes ideas, and follows the direction and decision of the group. This person positively contributes (not detracts) from group progress. **Note that all group members should be contributing in this way (whether or not they are taking on another role as well).**
- motivator - someone who encourages group members, praises efforts, shares positive comments, etc.
- peace-keeper - someone who addresses any conflict that arises, encourages group members to discuss and solve the problem before moving on.
- timekeeper - keeping an eye on group progress relative to time and giving reminders/updates to group members on time constraints.
- invite students to share other roles/ways of contributing...

Communication Skills

Although communication skills are put into practice everyday by students, a focus of this LES is bringing students' attention to specific communication skills and inviting them to reflect on how they as individuals apply these skills in their team environments.

As part of the reflection questions after each activity and/or your class introductions, have discussions with students that focus on the following:

How to make sure they are understood by others:

- make eye contact when speaking
- ask questions to ensure others have understood
- ask for a signal (thumbs up or down, nod) to indicate understanding (hint: if group members are working on tasks physically spaced far apart, using signals may be particularly helpful for communicating...)
- ask students for other ideas

How to be a good listener/show that they understand the messages of others:

- listen without interrupting
- look at the person who is speaking
- ask a question to clarify if needed
- nod head to show understanding
- ask students for other ideas

Different ways of communicating:

- verbally
- through gestures
- ask students for other ideas

Reference: Many of the community building ideas included in this resource were taken from the book *Character Education: 43 Fitness Activities for Community Building* by Donald R. Glover and Leigh Ann Anderson (Human Kinetics, 2003).