**Unit # 1 Title:  TEAMS: Together Everyone Assures My Success**

**Lesson Title:** Getting Caught in the Web          **Lesson #** 1 **of** 3

**Grade Level:** 6

**Length of Lesson:** 30 minutes

**Missouri Comprehensive Guidance Standard:**
PS.1:   Understanding Self as an Individual and as a Member of Diverse Local and Global
        Communities

**Grade Level Expectation (GLE):**
PS.1.B.06.a.i:  Identify and develop personal planning strategies to manage individual, family,
        and school responsibilities.
PS.1.C.06.a.i:  Demonstrate skills needed to participate in team building.

**American School Counselor Association National Standard (ASCA):**
   Personal/Social Development
        A:  Students will acquire the knowledge, attitude, and interpersonal skills to help them
            understand and respect self and others.

**Materials (include activity sheets and/ or supporting resources)**

A large ball of yarn, a pair of scissors, soccer or similar-sized ball, human knot directions.

**Show Me Standards:  Performance Goals (check one or more that apply)**

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| X | Goal 1:  gather, analyze and apply information and ideas<br>10.  Apply acquired information, ideas and skills to different contexts as students, workers, citizens and consumers. |
| X | Goal 2:  communicate effectively within and beyond the classroom<br>3.   Exchange information, questions and ideas while recognizing the perspectives of others. |
| X | Goal 3:  recognize and solve problems<br>2.   Develop and apply strategies based on ways others have prevented or solved problems.<br>3.   Develop and apply strategies based on one's own experience in preventing or solving problems. |
| X | Goal 4:  make decisions and act as responsible members of society<br>3.   Analyze the duties and responsibilities of individuals in societies.<br>5.   Develop, monitor, and revise plans of action to meet deadlines and accomplish goals.<br>6.   Identify tasks that require a coordinated effort and work with others to complete those tasks. |

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**This lesson supports the development of skills in the following academic content areas.**

| Academic Content Area(s) | | Specific Skill(s) |
|---|---|---|
| X | Communication Arts | 6. Participating in formal and informal presentations and discussions of issues and ideas |
| | Mathematics | |
| X | Social Studies | 6. Relationships of the individual and groups to institutions and cultural traditions |
| | Science | |
| | Health/Physical Education | |
| | Fine Arts | |

**Enduring Life Skill(s)**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| X | Perseverance | X | Integrity | X | Problem Solving |
| X | Courage | | Compassion | X | Tolerance |
| X | Respect | X | Goal Setting | | |

**Lesson Assessment (acceptable evidence):**

**Formative assessment relates to the summative assessment for unit (performance outcome for goals, objectives and GLEs).  Assessment can be question answer, performance activity, etc.**
Question/answer after activity in group format, reflection worksheet (see below)

**Lesson Preparation**

**Essential Questions:**  How can a person's actions effectively contribute to their community?

**Engagement (Hook):**  The Human Knot  (see attached directions)

**Procedures**

| Instructor Procedures: | Student Involvement: |
|---|---|
| 1. The counselor relates the following instructions: "We are going to start with Jane. She will hold the loose end of the ball of yarn, and then toss the ball to someone else in the group. He or she in turn will hold on to the string and throw the ball to someone else. You can throw the ball to anyone in the group, except the person to your immediate right or left." | 1. All students are to gather in a circle for this activity. Beginning with the first student, the ball of yarn is tossed around the group to form a giant web. |
| 2. Once the web is formed, the counselor clips the ball of yarn away from the web. The counselor asks the students to hold the web tightly enough that it can support a soccer ball, which is placed in the middle of the web. The group's job is to keep the ball | 2. Students work together to keep the ball balanced in the web. |

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| from falling through the web. | |
| 3. The counselor then asks one student to drop his/her hold on the web. | 3. One student drops his/her part of the yarn, and other students have to take up the slack and keep the ball from falling. |
| 4. The counselor then asks two more students to drop their hold on the yarn. | 4. The two students in question loosen their hold on the yarn. The other students will continue to take up the resulting slack. |
| 5. The counselor should consider the names of the students who make up the group. Choose an initial that will constitute a greater portion of the students. For example, "If your name begins with the letter J, drop your hold on the yarn." | 5. Once the other students drop the yarn, the remaining students will have difficulty maintaining control of the web and the soccer ball. |
| 6. Finally, ask all the students to drop the yarn, leaving the collapsed web in the middle of the group. Have the students sit around the web in a circle on the floor to begin discussion. Possible questions for the students in the group:<br>• To the group: "When the first student dropped the yarn, how hard was it to take up the slack?"<br>• To the first student to drop the yarn: "How did you feel when you first dropped the yarn?" and "How did you feel as everyone else was still participating, and you weren't part of the group?"<br>• To the group: "How did those of you who had to take up the slack feel as the others dropped out? How many of you wanted the chance to drop out as the job got harder?"<br>• To the group: "This yarn web is an analogy for what we have to do in life to be part of a team. Can you explain how this web activity relates to being part of a team?"<br>• To the group: "Other than a sports team, where else are you part of a group in which you expected hold up your 'end of the yarn'?" (Examples might include family, friendships, | 6. Students will participate in the group discussion. |

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| classroom, and school.) As the students offer their suggestions, discuss how they are expected to "hold their end of the yarn." What are their responsibilities to themselves and to those within each of those groups?<br><br>• To the group: "Now that everyone has dropped the web, what has happened to the shape? Can we get the shape and strength of the web back? What does that say about our relationships within the groups we find ourselves? If we try to pick up the web from the floor and use it again, what will happen? How does this relate to restoring damaged or broken relationships? When is it easiest to fix the web? How does this apply to our relationships?" | |

**Teacher Follow-Up Activities**

When working in groups, the teacher can use the web analogy to encourage students to work cooperatively and to put their best effort into the process.

**Counselor reflection notes (completed after the lesson)**

Activity Reflection


NAME:_____


Take a moment to think back on the activity we just completed.  Mention feelings, thoughts and concerns you may have had while doing the activity.


1.  How did you feel when either you or someone else had to let go of their string?

_____

_____

_____

_____


2.  If you were one who was asked to let go of the string, how did it feel to be removed from the "community" of students who were still participating?

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3.  What did you learn about yourself by doing the activity?  What did you learn about other students?  Did the group work well together?  Did members respect each other's ideas and allow everyone to suggest ideas?  Were there members who dominated the group?

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# *Human Knot*

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Games Index

Description of Icebreaker, Name Game, &
Teambuilding Activity

James Neill
Last updated:

## Human Knot

- a get-to-know-you icebreaker
- involves close physical proximity
- can be used as a name game
- helps a group learn about how to work together
- can also focus on group understanding of communication, leadership, problem solving, teamwork, trust, persistence, etc.

**Equipment:** None.

**Time:** ~15-20 minutes

**Brief Description**: Standing in a circle, group members reach across and shake hands - use hand connecting to a different person.

The group then tries to unravel the "human knot" by unthreading their bodies without letting go of each other people's hands.

## How to Run a Human Knot Session

Set up & instructions (1st round)
Facilitator notes
Links to other descriptions

**Set up & instructions**

- Be aware that the activity involves close physical proximity and touch potentially in sensitive places!  It can be used as a first activity in an adventurous program with volunteers (e.g., the start of an Outward Bound program).  However, if the program is less adventurous, or group members potentially will have significant problems with such proximity, e.g., due to culture, or social or psychological problems, then Human Knot could be introduced later in a program.

- Ideal group size is approximately 10, but it can be done with anywhere from about 7 to 16.  Much higher or lower and the task doesn't really work.  The more in a group, the more difficult the task, partly because of the complexity, and partly because there is physically less room to move.

- Ask participants to form a circle, shoulder-to-shoulder.  Encouraging/urging participants to all stand closer can be a subtle way of helping to prepare them for what is about to come.

- Ask participants to each place a hand in the middle of the circle and to grasp another hand.

- Then ask participants to put their other hand in the middle, grasp a different person's hand, and introduce themselves.

- Don't let participants let go of hands - some will be tempted to think the activity might then be over - but it is only just starting.

- Explain to participants that what you'd like them to do is untangle themselves, without letting go of hands, into a circle.

- There will be a mixture of reactions, often including nervous laughter, fun amusement, excitement, trepidation, strong suspicion that it can't be done, and others who may view the task as a somewhat sadistic or inappropriate joke.  Often some group members will have done the task before, but this doens't really matter, each time the task is unique.

- Participants may change their grip so as to more comfortable, but they are not to unclasp and re-clasp so as to undo the knot.

- If you want name-learning emphasized, then explain that whenever the group is talking to someone, or about someone, that the person's first name must be used.  This usually requires supervision and reinforcement by the instructor, but once enforced, is excellent for learning names.  It also usually helps the group to work together and find solution, because their communications and more accurate with names involved.

- Stand back and see what happens.

- Be prepared to see little progress for quite some time (up to 10 minutes).  However, once the initial unfolding happens, the pace towards the final solution usually seems to quicken.

- However, because each occasion is unique, there are also odd times when a very fast solution falls out - too easy.  In such cases, you ask a group to try the task again - its usually a bit harder second time around.  Occasionally, the task seems too hard and participants seem to make almost no progress.  Let them struggle for about 10 minutes, then you can offer the group one unclasp and reclasp - they

need to discuss and decide what unclasp-reclasp would be most useful.

- Most of the time a full circle falls out, but occasionally there are two or even three interlocking circles.  So, really the task is to sort the knot out into its simplest structure.

## Facilitator notes

- A switched-on facilitator can get a lot of information about participants in a short space of time with this activity.  For this reason, the activity is commonly used in group-based selection processes for jobs which involve closely working with others.

- Stay at a moderate distance, allowing the group to handle the activity with feeling like they're being too closely observed; but maintain good hearing contact and be ready to step in to help answer questions or change the direction of the activity quickly when appropriate.

- Slowly wander around the circle, moving in and out as appropriate, e.g., if you want people to use names in every communication, then this needs to reinforced in a friendly, but firm way, several times.

- It is relatively easy to notice who's talking, who's not, who seems comfortable, who doesn't.  Also note that sometimes the natural leaders are not in a good position to lead - do they try to dominate inappropriately or do they sit back appropriately and just do what they can.  Sometimes, a new leader emerges from being in an opportune position in the knot.  This can offer this person a significant boost.  Also, almost everyone gets a positive sense of having played his or her part.  Some people have difficultly enjoying the activity due to their uncomfortableness physically (e.g., obese, very tall, or inflexible people may find the activity particularly awkward).

- It is important to provide appropriate help if the activity proves too difficult.  This might be encouragement that it can be done (some groups lack confidence and would give up too early), helping a couple of people communicate to find a solution to part of the knot, etc.  Or this might be allowing an unclasp-reclasp.  How much to give is a fine balancing act.  The task should be challenging, but especially as an initial activity, it should give the group some initial confidence and momentum in being able to work together to solve problems.

Essential questions:

1. You knew that if you let go of your partner's hands, the circle would be broken. What did you do to avoid this from happening?

2. How did your role contribute to keep the circle together?

3. How well did you think the group worked together?

4. What do you think you've learned from this activity which can be applied in future activities?"