

FACS: Communication Games

Summary

Playing games is fun, builds class unity, and teaches concrete lessons. Two games that teach communication skills are Cosmic Motions and Silent Ball. Students practice sending and receiving messages (nerf balls). They practice eye contact, focusing despite distractions, nonverbal communication, getting along with others, problem solving, and listening skills.

Main Core Tie

FCS 6th Grade

[Strand 3 Standard 1](#)

Time Frame

1 class periods of 70 minutes each

Life Skills

Communication, Social & Civic Responsibility

Materials

A board and marker, 3-4 nerf balls, 1 nerf ball that is different than the others, A bell or other noisy object that is easy to pass.

Background for Teachers

Read "Learning to Play, Playing to Learn". Why do we play games? The number 1 reason is to have fun. If the game isn't fun, we won't play it. Other answers to discuss-- friendship, learn, exercise, etc. What is the most important part of any game? The number 1 reason is people. Scores don't happen by themselves. You are more likely to remember the people and friends you played with rather than scores. Nobody answered that we like to hurt or humiliate each other. When we play games, we make sure everyone is having fun, and we take care of each other so no one gets hurt. Is cheating fun? Only for the person who is cheating. We make rules to make the game fair for everyone. You are more likely to make friends with those who play fair, rather than those who cheat.

Rules for playing games: #1- If someone gets hurt, the person who caused it sits out with them until they feel better.

#2- If there is a disagreement, the two people having the disagreement leave the game to work it out. Sometimes both people are right in a disagreement. For example, a tag game where the person doesn't feel the tag. Who is right? The tagger or the person being tagged? When discussing a disagreement, it's okay to be quiet for a few minutes to calm down. Then follow these basic communication rules. 1. Make eye contact. 2. Speak in a calm voice. 3. State your feelings. I feel _____ when you _____.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will recognize and practice improving their communication skills. Students will have fun, laugh, and get to know each other.

Instructional Procedures

Write these questions on the board: Why do we play games? What is the most important part of any game. Discuss answers with students.

Tell students the 2 main rules in the game, and teach them communication techniques to deal with problems. Have kids raise hands who are willing to follow rules. Those who raise hands can participate in the game. The goal is for everyone to feel safe in the game. Play the game. Discuss with students good and poor communication in the game. Play again as long as you like.

Here are two games that I use. If the class doesn't like the first one, then I use the second one. Cosmic Motions-- The class stands in a circle, so that everyone can see one another. Create an orbit pattern with the first ball. This means that each student throws the ball to another student until everyone has had it once. The last student throws the ball to the first person. When the class can pass the ball quickly and without mistakes, add another ball. When they can handle that, add another ball. Process any observations and give suggestions for better communication (passing and catching the ball). If they can handle that, add a comet (bell). It is passed to the right and makes a lot of noise. Last, add the different ball. Mine is bright and makes a weird noise. It is a black hole and follows the orbit pattern backwards.

Silent Ball-- Students sit up on desks and throw one nerf ball to different people. Students are out when they drop a ball, or throw it in a way that can't be caught. Students are also out if they talk. A referee (teacher or student) decides who is out. On difficult calls, the class must communicate without speaking who should be out. Stop the game when there are 4-5 people left, and start over so everyone can play again.

Strategies for Diverse Learners

Students who don't want to play the game can watch quietly from the side and list 5 things they learn.

Extensions

These games are great to use when the class ends 5-10 minutes early and will also reinforce the concepts taught.

Assessment Plan

I follow up with a short discussion of how to use communication concepts in real life. Students rate how well they communicate with different people. Then the student picks 3 people, and lists how they can improve their communication. I check and respond to each student's answers in class.

Bibliography

Steffens, Charlie, & Gorin, Spencer. "Learning to Play, Playing to Learn"

Authors

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