CIVIL AIR PATROL

United States Air Force Auxiliary

CADET ENCAMPMENT PROGRAM

L30, L31, L32 Team Leadership Problems

Lesson Plan for Facilitators

A team leadership problem (TLP) is a hands-on game, puzzle, or simulation that tests a flight's ability to practice the leadership principles they have been studying. These TLPs were chosen for their ability to be executed with minimal, inexpensive equipment in a variety of locations. They are designed to be completed by the entire flight of 12-20 cadets. These are some suggested activities, but local leaders can create their own or use installation resources.

Planning

TLPs present a logistical challenge, especially for large encampments, but the challenge is manageable with prior planning. The curriculum and plans officer should read through the suggested problems and decide which option to offer for each session and who will facilitate the problems.

Structure: TLPs should increase in complexity through the week. The suggested activities are scaled to offer continual challenge to teams that are growing more skilled in teamwork. Two activity options are provided for each TLP session. It is suggested that encampments use one activity from L30, one from L31 and one from L32. If local leaders choose to use alternate exercises, please try to integrate them into a scale of gradually increasing difficulty.

Flights are given a second chance to complete the TLP the next day to allow students to apply the lessons learned from the debriefing. TLP #1 is repeated prior to TLP #2 commencing and flights are expected to fare better their second time around. Likewise TLP #2 is repeated prior to TLP #3. TLP#3 is only completed once.

Problem Selection: It is suggested that all flights complete the same TLPs for ease of cross comparison and logistics. However, there may be equipment, timing or space issues that make it easier for different flights or squadrons to perform different problems. If this is the case, extra effort will be required to ensure that each flight does the correct activity for their repeat next training day.

Scheduling: Scheduling is an important factor for TLPs. Having all flights complete their activity during the same time block in different locations is easy to schedule, but requires having a facilitator and full set of materials for each flight. It makes observing multiple flights working through a problem impossible. Likewise, having all flights rotate through a single location may impact other activities and make transportation a problem.

To avoid delays and downtime encampments will need to look at their facilities and resources to make the best scheduling decisions for their circumstances. It may make sense to have one facilitator and

set of materials per squadron. Alternatively, it may be logistically easier to transport the facilitator and materials to the flights.

Facilitators: Facilitators are tasked with setting up the problem; briefing the flight; refereeing the activity and leading the debriefing after the problem. During the active problem solving the facilitator times the problem, watches for safety and rule violations, observes team behavior and takes notes. Depending on the scheduling of TLPs, the encampment may need a varying number of facilitators. Suggested facilitators for the team leadership problems include the curriculum & plans officer, specific designated training officers, advanced cadets, squadron commanders, first sergeants and/or headquarters staff.

Honor Flight Consideration: Performance and improvement in TLPs should be considered when selecting honor flight. To this end a member of the cadet executive staff or others may wish to observe the activities. Flights may be evaluated subjectively or objectively. If flights will be "scored" according to the time it took to complete a TLP then care must be taken to ensure a level playing field for all teams. All objectives, distances, difficulty modifications, etc… should be applied consistently to allow impartial ranking.

Flight Staff Participation: It is suggested that flight staff participate in the TLPs with their flight. While not required, it builds team cohesion and morale to have the entire flight working through the problems together. Participating cadre must not take leadership roles or offer solutions, but participate as followers.

Location and Supplies: The selected TLPs were designed to be workable in a variety of locations. They may be done indoors or outdoors, in the encampment area or in the field with slight adaptations. Required equipment lists are provided for all activities. The logistics staff should be charged with ensuring all necessary supplies are on hand and well organized. The facilitator will ensure they are in the right place at the right time and ready for the activity.

Practice: Facilitators, cadet cadre and training officers should experience each TLP prior to the students attempting them; firsthand experience with a TLP helps cadre explain the rules to students and manage the overall activity. The cadet cadre selection exercise or pre-encampment training is ideal for these practice sessions.

Facilitator Guidelines

Execution: Each TLP includes time for briefing, planning, action, and debriefing. In the briefing it's critical that the cadets understand the task they are to complete and any rules or restrictions placed upon them. Planning time can be explicit, such as telling the cadets they have five minutes to plan before they begin, or integrated into the action time. As cadets progress they will discover that sketching out a workable plan before beginning is to their benefit. The action portion is where the cadets work to solve the problem before them. **Keep notes on the students' actions, interactions and strategies to discuss during the debriefing.**

The debriefing is where the cadets' choices are tied to leadership theories and where most of the learning from the exercise takes place. Debriefing should be a dialogue, not a speech about what the students did right and wrong. Ask open ended questions about what the cadets did, why they

made those choices and how they could improve for next time. Offer your observations and help them to think about how to improve their teamwork- both in the abstract leadership problems and in their regular flight training.

Difficulty: As facilitator, you can control how hard or easy to make these tasks. A flight in phase II learning will have different needs from a flight in phase III (*Cadet Encampment Handbook §5.7*). Some teams will experience significant challenges with the same activity that another team takes in stride. While it is generally not necessary to make the challenges easier, as learning from failure can be very beneficial, it may be necessary to add additional challenge for more advanced teams.

Suggestions are included for increasing the difficulty levels of the activities and may include adding or shortening a time limit, taking away or adding equipment, blindfolding one or more cadets and/or disallowing oral communication for one or more cadets. If the team is functioning cohesively, you can make the obstacle course longer and harder and more physically challenging in order to deepen their experience of what they can achieve together.

TEAM LEADERSHIP PROBLEM

L30A – HELIUM STICK

Theme: Teamwork & Communication Skills

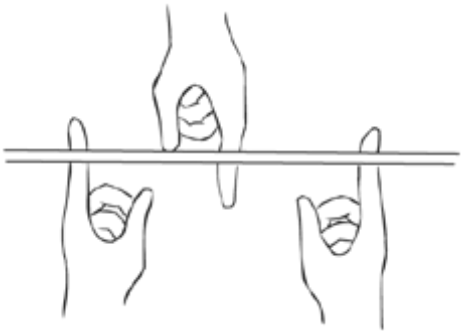
Estimated Time: 25-30 minutes total. 5 minute briefing, 10-15 minutes active problem solving, 10 minute debrief

Resources Required:

- 1 thin, light-weight, 8-10 ft "Helium Stick." A lightweight tent pole or thin bamboo rod (from a gardening supply store) works well.
- Optional for added challenge: large washers, blindfold(s), hula hoop

Step-by-Step Instructions:

The Helium Stick is a deceptively simple but powerful exercise for learning how to work together and communicate as a team. The team must lower a stick to the ground in a coordinated fashion.



1. Have the flight line up in two rows facing each other, about two feet apart.
2. Introduce the Helium Stick- a long, thin lightweight rod.
3. Ask students to point their index fingers and hold their arms out, palms inward.
4. Lay the Helium Stick down on their fingers. Get the group to adjust their finger heights until the Helium Stick is horizontal and everyone's index fingers are touching the stick.
5. Give the briefing; explain that the challenge is to lower the Helium Stick to the ground. Explain the rules, consequences and time limit.
6. Begin the activity. Set a timer for 15 minutes.
7. Observe and take notes. Add extra challenge for teams that succeed quickly. Help refocus the efforts of teams that are struggling.
8. When the timer goes off, lead the debriefing.

Rules:

1. Each student's fingers must be in contact with the Helium Stick at all times. Pinching or grabbing the pole is not allowed – it must rest on top of fingers.
2. If anyone's finger is caught not touching the Helium Stick, the task will be restarted.
3. Communication must remain positive. No putdowns.

Facilitator:

Particularly in the early stages, the Helium Stick has a habit of mysteriously "floating" up rather than coming down. The collective upwards pressure created by everyone's fingers tends to be greater than the weight of the stick. As a result, the more a group tries, the more the stick tends to "float."
Some flights may be frustrated after 5 to 10 minutes of trying; believing it not to be possible or that it is too hard. If a group is struggling, the facilitator can offer direct suggestions or suggest the flight stop the task, discuss their strategy, and then have another go.

Less often, a flight may appear to be succeeding too fast. In response, be particularly vigilant about fingers touching the pole. You can add further difficulty by adding large washers to each end of the stick and explain the washers should not fall off during the exercise, or it's a restart. Alternately, instruct one or more students not to speak- possibly leaving the quietest team member as the voice of the team. You may blindfold one or more students. This activity may be repeated with a hula hoop for a different dynamic.

Take notes while the flight is performing the challenge. What's the overall strategy? Did they make a plan before beginning or leap right into action? Who's speaking up, who's staying quiet? How did the group deal with frustration? When the flight has completed the task successfully or run out of the allotted time, move on to the debriefing. Have the team gather around. Ask them for their observations and give your feedback.

Possible Solutions:

There's no secret trick to this exercise. The flight needs to calm down, concentrate and very slowly, patiently lower the Helium Stick. Positive communication and motivation is important if a team is getting frustrated. Some teams may have students angle their fingers downward into a "trough" to keep the pole steady. Some teams may lower to their knees, others will squat or bend at the waist all the way down. Moving closer together so team members' arms are touching and steadying each other may be helpful for some teams.

Debriefing:

Here are some sample questions you could use to process your flight's experience:

- What did we just do?
- How well did the group cope with this challenge?
- When you got frustrated were you able to calm down and refocus? How?
- What skills did it take to be successful as a group?
- What roles did people play?
- What were some leadership concepts learned from this exercise?
- How can these leadership concepts be applied to outside this activity?

Desired take-aways include an emphasis on the team's common goal, the value of team diversity, the importance of team spirit and good oral communication.

TEAM LEADERSHIP PROBLEM #1 REPEAT

Estimated Time: 20 minutes total. 5 minute briefing, 10 minutes active problem solving, 5 minute debrief

Cadets will be given a chance to attempt this TLP a second time before moving on to the next challenge. Give initial briefing, explaining the objective and rules. When the flight repeats the Helium Stick exercise, watch to see if they are applying the lessons learned from the previous day. Do they use yesterday's strategy, or try something new? Most teams should perform better on the second try. However, watch for teams that are overconfident. The task takes coordination and a high degree of control. If a team has an "I know this already" mentality, they may struggle more than they expect. In your debriefing, ask why they made the choices they did and how they applied lessons learned previously.

TEAM LEADERSHIP PROBLEM

L30B – THE MAZE

Theme: Teamwork & Communication Skills

Estimated Time: 30-40 minutes total. 5 minute briefing, 15-25 minutes active problem solving, 10 minute debrief

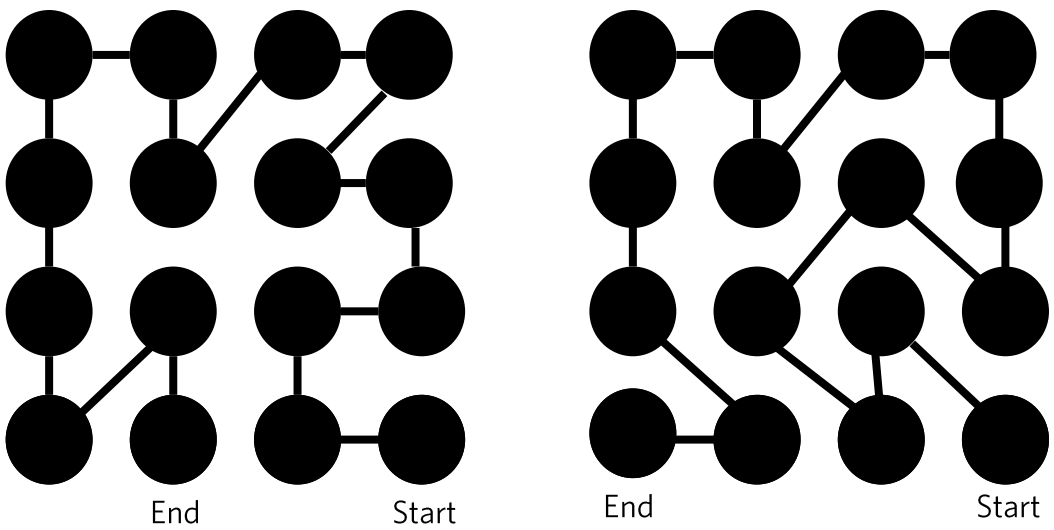
Resources Required:

- 25 "bases" marked with tape, small cones, chalk, paper plates, etc…
- Maze solution map for facilitator

Step-by-Step Instructions:

The Maze is an exercise that uses trial and error problem solving to encourage flights to work together and communicate as a team. The team must navigate through an unmarked maze one at a time.

1. Before the start of the activity create a quick sketch of the maze and map the pathway.
2. Create the basic maze by laying out 16 bases in four rows of four, spaced 12-24 inches apart.
3. Have students gather around the maze and give the briefing. The challenge is to get all team members though the specific path of the maze. Explain the rules, consequences and time limit.
4. Begin the activity. Set a timer for 25 minutes. Signal when a student makes a wrong move by making a "beep" or "buzz" noise.
5. Observe and take notes. Add extra challenge for teams that succeed quickly. Help refocus the efforts of teams that are struggling.
6. When the timer goes off, lead the debriefing.



Example mazes. Facilitators can create their own.

Rules:

1. Only one cadet attempting the maze at a time.
2. If a student steps on the wrong base, his or her turn ends and the next person begins.
3. Once the cadet steps off a base, it is considered a move. A person may not step back to a previous base.
4. Communication must remain positive. No putdowns.

Facilitator:

The Maze is a memory and communication game. Students need to discover a path through the maze by trial and error. During the challenge, the group receives a signal (beep, buzz, bell ringing, etc…) if a group member makes an error going through the maze. Correct moves are noted by no signal. The group must memorize correct moves so that each person going through the maze can follow the correct pathway.

To complete the challenge each team member must pass through the maze without stepping on the incorrect bases. The facilitator creates a maze path ahead of time on a slip of paper for reference. Each base is used once and only once. The group is told which base is the start but must discover the path and the exit base through trial and error. Cadets line up behind the starting base and attempt the maze one at a time. The instructor monitors the challenge and makes a "beep" or "buzz" noise to designate an incorrect move. If an error is made the cadet must return to the back of the line and wait until all other team members have had a turn before trying again.

Necessarily this activity will elicit a great deal of wrong guesses and the team will get "buzzed" frequently. This may be stressful for those who are easily frustrated. If a group is struggling, the facilitator can offer direct suggestions or suggest the flight stop the task, discuss their strategy, and then have another go. For flights that coordinate and succeed quickly, you can add further difficulty by attempting a second maze path where no one may speak or use any type of oral communication. You may also add more bases and work a 25 base maze.

Take notes while the flight is performing the challenge. What's the overall strategy? Did they make a plan before beginning or leap right into action? Who's speaking up, who's staying quiet? When the flight has completed the task successfully or run out of the allotted time, move on to the debriefing. Have the team gather around. Ask them for their observations and give your feedback.

Possible Solutions:

The maze can only be negotiated through trial and error. It's a process of elimination to discover the path. Cadets must pay close attention to memorize the correct sequence and communicate with each other to guide teammates through the path. The solutions follow the designated paths created ahead of time. Flights will need varying amounts of time to solve the problem.

Debriefing:
Here are some sample questions you could use to process your flight's experience:

- What did we just do?
- How well did the group cope with this challenge?
- When you got frustrated were you able to calm down and refocus? How?
- What skills did it take to be successful as a group?
- What did you learn?
- What were some leadership concepts learned from this exercise?
- How can these leadership concepts be applied to outside this activity?

Desired take-aways include an emphasis on the team's common goal, the value of team diversity, the importance of team spirit and good oral communication.

TEAM LEADERSHIP PROBLEM #1 REPEAT

Estimated Time: 20 minutes total. 5 minute briefing, 10 minutes active problem solving, 5 minute debrief

Cadets will be given a chance to attempt this TLP a second time before moving on to the next challenge. Give initial briefing, explaining the objective and rules. When the flight repeats The Maze exercise, watch to see if they are applying the lessons learned from the previous day. Do they use yesterday's strategy, or try something new? Watch out for students who are still frustrated by wrong moves. In your debriefing, ask why they made the choices they did and how they applied lessons learned previously.

TEAM LEADERSHIP PROBLEM

L31A – BLIND COUNT OFF

Theme: Teamwork & Communication Skills

Estimated Time: 45 minutes total. 5 minute briefing, 30 minutes active problem solving, 10 minute debrief

Resources Required:

- Optional: blindfolds

Step-by-Step Instructions:

This activity highlights the importance of listening and planning. The team must count to a specified number one at a time without prior coordination.

1. Arrange the flight in a circle. Have flight members turn around so that their back is facing the middle of the circle. Distribute blindfolds, if using.
2. Give the briefing. The group must count to a specific number (#students x 3) out loud, one at a time. Explain the rules, consequences and time limit.
3. Begin the activity. Set a timer for 15 minutes.
4. Observe and take notes. Add extra challenge for the teams that succeed quickly. Help refocus the efforts of teams that are struggling.
5. When team succeeds or the timer goes off, allow team members five minutes to discuss the game.
6. Reset students for a variation.
7. Begin the second activity. Set a timer for 10 minutes. Continue to observe and note team interactions.
8. When the timer goes off, lead the debrief.

Rules:

1. Cadets may not move from their spot.
2. No speaking, except to call out numbers.
3. Everyone must speak once before someone can say another number.
4. If two people speak at the same time, or a number is said twice, the flight must start over again.

Facilitator:

By deliberately eliminating the flight's planning time, this activity highlights its importance and also touches on extemporaneous planning and listening skills. Only one person may say a number at a time. There is no planning and every student must speak once before anyone says a second number. If two people say the same number at the same time, or a number is said twice, the group must start over

The activity will usually start with a number of people speaking numbers at the same time and needing to start over repeatedly. The early participants should eventually work out a sequence and then the cadets who have been waiting quietly will need to participate as well. Make sure no cadet says a second number before everyone has spoken up once.

Some flights, particularly those with many eager-to-lead types, will struggle with this challenge. If a group is struggling, the facilitator can offer hints or direct suggestions. If a team has not completed the challenge after 10 minutes, allow cadets five minutes to work out a strategy and try the problem again.

Many flights will use the circle to their advantage, going around three times with numbers. You can add further difficulty by mandating that the team cannot use the same pattern for multiple rounds. Once a flight has mastered the circle, you can have them spread out randomly and repeat the exercise without the benefit of the structured formation. You can also use memory work instead of numbers, each cadet saying one word of the definition of leadership or members of the chain of command.

Take notes while the flight is performing the challenge. What's the overall strategy? Who's speaking over others and who's hanging back? Is the team visibly frustrated, or working patiently? When the flight has completed the task successfully or run out of the allotted time, move on to the debriefing. Have the team gather around. Ask them for their observations and give your feedback.

Possible Solutions:

This is a very challenging exercise. There are many possible strategies for this exercise. The simplest solution for the circle is for the cadets to say numbers moving around the circle three times. If the team establishes a pattern for the first round, they can use the same pattern for the next two repeats. Once the team moves away from the circle or are told they cannot repeat patterns, active listening skills become more crucial. Cadets will need to use active listening skills, patience and persistence to complete the challenge.

Debriefing:

Here are some sample questions you could use to process your flight's experience:

- What did we just do?
- How well did the group cope with this challenge?
- What skills did it take to be successful as a group?
- What did you learn?
- How would the challenge have been different if you'd been allowed to plan aloud before beginning?
- What were some leadership concepts learned from this exercise?
- How can these leadership concepts be applied to outside this activity?

Desired take-aways include an emphasis on the importance of planning, listening skills, patience , the importance of team spirit and good oral communication.

TEAM LEADERSHIP PROBLEM #2 REPEAT

Estimated Time: 20 minutes total. 5 minute briefing, 10 minutes active problem solving, 5 minute debrief

Cadets will be given a chance to attempt this TLP a second time before moving on to the next challenge. Give initial briefing, explaining the objective and rules. When the flight repeats the Blind Count Off exercise, watch to see if they are applying the lessons learned from the previous day. Do they use yesterday's strategy, or try something new? Most teams should use a strategy to complete the exercise easily on the repeat. However, watch for teams that are not working well together. The task takes coordination and patience. If a team has trouble listening to each other, they may struggle more than they expect. In your debrief, ask why they made the choices they did and how they applied lessons learned previously.

TEAM LEADERSHIP PROBLEM

L31B – TOWER POWER

Theme: Teamwork & Communication Skills

Estimated Time: 25-30 minutes total. 5 minute briefing, 10-15 minutes active problem solving, 10 minute debrief

Resources Required:

- Large cardboard or foam blocks, at least one per two participants. Foam bricks may be found more cheaply at craft stores, but may not hold up long term. Bricks should be roughly 4x3x12 and light weight. They may be the same size or varied.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

Tower Power is a physically challenging exercise that highlights the importance of cooperation and problem solving. Cadets must work together to build a tower of blocks without using their hands.

1. Designate a "building site" for the brick tower.
2. Place the bricks about 20-30 feet away. You may add obstacles or specify a route between the two locations.
3. Have the flight gather round so they can see the course and give the briefing. The challenge is for the flight to move all the bricks and build a tower without using their hands. Explain the rules, consequences and time limit.
4. Begin the activity. Set a timer for 15 minutes.
5. Observe and take notes. Add extra challenge for teams that succeed quickly. Help refocus the efforts of teams that are struggling.
6. When the timer goes off, lead the debriefing.

Rules:

1. Two students must transport each brick. Each set of partners may transport only one brick at a time.
2. Students may not touch the bricks with their hands.
3. The bricks may not touch the ground, except for the base brick of the tower. Bricks may be set purposely on the ground for repositioning, but if a brick is dropped, it must be reset at the starting point.
4. The group must transport each brick using a different combination of body parts. No set of partners can transport a brick in the same method that other teammates did. For example, the first set of partners may use their elbows, the second set of partners may use the knees, third set shoulder and back, etc…
5. One set of partners may not help another set during the transport phase of the challenge. Team members may, however, help teammates pick up bricks for transport and stack bricks on the tower, as long as they don't use their hands. The teammates who transported the brick

must still be the principle stackers. They cannot relinquish control of the brick, but teammates may assist them by steadying the tower or balancing a brick while it is being placed.

6. Communication must remain positive. No putdowns.
7. If the group breaks any rule, it must take all bricks back to the starting point and start the challenge from the beginning.

Facilitator:

This activity is physically challenging and requires creative problem solving and teamwork to complete the challenge. The students must transport the lightweight blocks with a partner and build a tower at the designated site located 20-30 feet away. Team members must figure out how to transport the blocks to the building site and then figure out how they will work together to build the tower.

All bricks must be transported with a partner and no two bricks can be transported the same way. Cadets may help teammates pick up bricks for transport and assist in building the tower. If a brick is dropped while being transported, it must be returned to the start. If any flight member uses their hands, moves a brick without a teammate or knocks over the tower, all bricks are moved back to their starting positions.

If a group is struggling, the facilitator can offer direct suggestions or suggest the flight stop the task, discuss their strategy, and then have another go. For flights who coordinate and succeed quickly you can add further difficulty by adding more blocks, adding obstacles to crawl over or under during the transport phase, or numbering the blocks and mandating that the tower be built in a specific order Alternately, instruct one or more students not to speak and/or blindfold one or more students.

Take notes while the flight is performing the challenge. What's the overall strategy? Who's speaking up, who's staying quiet? Did the team make a plan before starting? When the flight has completed the task successfully or run out of the allotted time, move on to the debriefing. Have the team gather around. Ask them for their observations and give your feedback.

Possible Solutions:

Team members first need to decide who will work together as partners and then discuss how they will transport the bricks so that each set of partners uses a different method. After moving the bricks to the building site, team members need to help one another stack the bricks. The structural integrity of the tower and the height can be highly challenging. Teammates who are finished transporting should assist those who are attempting to stack a brick.

Debriefing:

Here are some sample questions you could use to process your flight's experience:

- What did we just do?
- How well did the group cope with this challenge?
- When something went wrong, how did you address it?
- What skills did it take to be successful as a group?

- What did you learn?
- What were some leadership concepts learned from this exercise?
- How can these leadership concepts be applied to outside this activity?

Desired take-aways include an emphasis on the team's creative problem solving, team cooperation, communication skills and team spirit.

TEAM LEADERSHIP PROBLEM #2 REPEAT

Estimated Time: 20 minutes total. 5 minute briefing, 10 minutes active problem solving, 5 minute debrief

Cadets will be given a chance to attempt this TLP a second time before moving on to the next challenge. You may use the same path as the previous day or a new obstacle course. Give initial briefing, explaining the objective and rules. When the flight repeats the Tower Power exercise, watch to see if they are applying the lessons learned from the previous day. Do they use yesterday's strategy, or try something new? Do they use the same pairs as yesterday, or work with different teammates? In your debriefing, ask why they made the choices they did and how they applied lessons learned previously.

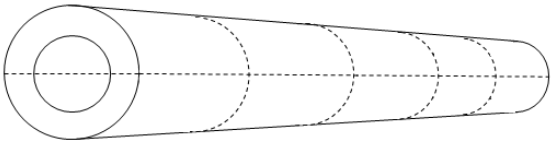
TEAM LEADERSHIP PROBLEM

L32A – PIPELINE

Theme: Teamwork, Problem Solving & Communication Skills

Estimated Time: 30-45 minutes total. 5 minute briefing, 15-30 minutes active problem solving, 10 minute debrief

Resources Required:



- 1-4 large marbles (aprox. 1" diameter)
- Lengths of half pipe, 8-12 inches in length. One per flight member. Hollow foam pool noodles available at the dollar store can be cut into 12 inch segments and then cut in half lengthwise. Other half pipe or narrow guttering may be used.
- Optional for added challenge: balls of varying sizes and weights (ping pong, pool, tennis, small ball bearings, etc…)

Step-by-Step Instructions:

Pipeline is a physical group problem solving and communication exercise. The team must move a marble through an obstacle course using short lengths of pipe.

1. Designate the starting point, obstacles and ending point for the course.
2. Have the flight gather round so they can see the course and give the briefing. The challenge is for the flight to move the marble through the course using lengths of half pipe. Explain the rules, consequences and time limit.
3. Begin the activity. Set a timer for 15 minutes.
4. Observe and take notes. Add extra challenge for teams that succeed quickly. Help refocus the efforts of teams that are struggling.
5. When team succeeds, or the timer goes off, reset students for a variation.
6. Begin the second activity. Set a timer for 10 minutes. Continue to observe and note team interactions.
7. When the timer goes off, lead the debrief.

Rules:

1. The marble cannot touch the ground.
2. No one may touch the marble with their hands.
3. Everyone must move the marble at least once.
4. When the marble is in your possession, you may not move your feet.
5. Communication must remain positive. No putdowns.

Facilitator:

Decide on a starting point, ending point and any obstacles to include such going over a wall, under a table, down stairs, around a tree, etc… This problem is strategically simpler than previous activities. The physical hurdles of the obstacles will present the main problem solving challenges. Students must take the marble from the starting point to the finish without touching or dropping it. Every person must carry the marble at least once. When the marble is in your possession, you may not move your feet.

If a group is struggling, the facilitator can offer direct suggestions or suggest the flight stop the task, discuss their strategy, and then have another go. For flights that coordinate and succeed quickly, you can add further difficulty by adding more obstacles or marbles to the mix. Different balls may be used for variations. Challenge flights to complete the course as quickly as possible. If all flights are competing on the same obstacle course you might time the flights and reward the flight or squadron with the fastest time of the day.

Take notes while the flight is performing the challenge. What's the overall strategy? Did the team take a moment to make a plan at the beginning or just leap in? Who's speaking up, who's staying quiet? When the flight has completed the task successfully or run out of the allotted time, move on to the debriefing. Have the team gather around. Ask them for their observations and give your feedback.

Possible Solutions:

There are many possible solutions to the Pipeline challenge. The variations in the obstacles will make the biggest difference for teams. If flexible half pipe is used teams may "cradle" the marble and prevent rolling. Most teams will set up a brigade line to pass it along while not moving their feet. If half pipe is rigid teams will have to coordinate their movements so the marble rolls along without falling off the end.

Debriefing:

Here are some sample questions you could use to process your flight's experience:

- What did we just do?
- How well did the group cope with this challenge?
- What were some leadership concepts learned from this exercise?
- How can these leadership concepts be applied to outside this activity?
- How did the lessons learned in previous leadership challenges inform your planning for this activity?

Desired take-aways include an emphasis on the team's creative problem solving, team cooperation, communication skills and team spirit.

TEAM LEADERSHIP PROBLEM

L32B – BLACK HOLE

Theme: Teamwork, Problem Solving & Communication Skills

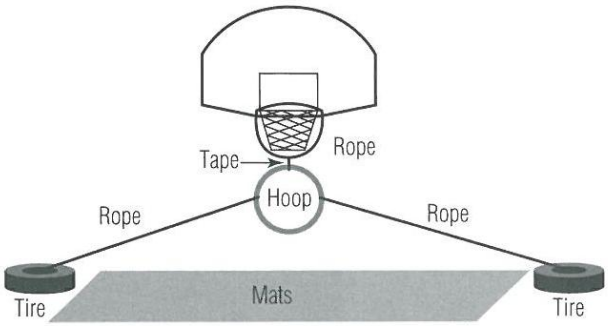
Estimated Time: 25-30 minutes total. 5 minute briefing, 10-15 minutes active problem solving, 10 minute debrief

Resources Required:

- One hula hoop
- Masking tape
- Three lengths of rope (6'+) to suspend the hoop between the tires and the basket.
- Two tires, weights or tent pegs to anchor ropes
- Mats (recommended)
- Suspension point- basketball hoop, rafter, tree branch, pull up bar, etc… (7'+)

Step-by-Step Instructions:

The Black Hole is both physically and intellectually challenging. The team must pass through a suspended hula hoop without touching it.



1. Prepare the black hole as described in "Safety Considerations"
2. Have the flight gather round so they can see the setup and give the briefing. The challenge is for the flight pass all members through the "black hole" without touching it or the ropes. Explain the rules, consequences and time limit.
3. Begin the activity. Set a timer for 15 minutes.
4. Observe and take notes. Add extra challenge for teams that succeed quickly. Help refocus the efforts of teams that are struggling.
5. When the timer goes off, lead the debrief.

Rules:

1. All group members must go through the black hole.
2. No person may touch the black hole or the ropes connected to the hoop.
3. No one may step over the dividing line.
4. No one may dive through the hoop.
5. Group members may not reach under, around or over the hula hoop to help. They may reach through the hoop to help.
6. If a group member breaks a rule, that person and a teammate who has passed through the hoop must start again.
7. Communication must remain positive. No putdowns.

Facilitator:

To complete the problem all group members must pass through the black hole. The challenge is designed so that group members must help each other and offer lots of physical support. No one is allowed to touch the hoop or the rope, nor step over the dividing line. There is absolutely no diving through the hoop or throwing teammates. Advise cadets to use safe lifting techniques and great care when moving teammates. This challenge requires team members to cooperate and trust each other.

If a group is struggling, the facilitator can offer direct suggestions or suggest the flight stop the task, discuss their strategy, and then have another go. For flights that coordinate and succeed quickly, you can add further difficulty by noticing equipment or personnel that were "left behind" and must be retrieved, such as the flight guidon or a willing squadron commander. If flight staff have not previously been participating in the TLPs, this is a good one to do with the flight. The team must send students back through the black hole to retrieve the items and return them to the far side.

Take notes while the flight is performing the challenge. What's the overall strategy? Did the team take a moment to make a plan at the beginning or just leap in? Who's speaking up, who's staying quiet? When the flight has completed the task successfully or run out of the allotted time, move on to the debriefing. Have the team gather around. Ask them for their observations and give your feedback.

Safety Considerations:

To suspend the hula hoop, tie a length of rope around you suspension point in a loop. Use a length of masking tape between the rope and the hoop. If a student should fall or put too much pressure on the hoop during the challenge the tape will quickly snap, preventing the participant from falling and finding themselves suspended on the hoop. The bottom of the hoop should be about three feet from the ground. Use the other ropes and weights to anchor the hoop and prevent it from twisting around.

Use mats, if possible, so that the working space is well cushioned and safe. Group member must lift and move each other carefully. Under no circumstances are cadets allowed to dive through the hoop or throw a teammate through the black hole. Before the task begins, discuss the fact that teammates are putting their trust in the group. Group members must do everything they can to keep teammates supported when helping them move.

Possible Solutions:

Most groups start by lifting and sliding one group member through the hoop feet first while keeping his or her body straight. After the first person passes through the hoop, group members will be on both sides of the black hole to help their teammates through the hoop. Getting the last person through the hoop presents the greatest difficulty. Teammates on the far side of the black hole may reach across to the starting side as long as they do not touch the hoop or floor on the outer space side. It may be helpful to have someone on their hand and knees just inside the far side so the last crew member can step through onto their back with the support of teammates.

Debriefing:

Here are some sample questions you could use to process your flight's experience:

- What did we just do?
- How well did the group cope with this challenge?
- What were some leadership concepts learned from this exercise?
- How can these leadership concepts be applied to outside this activity?
- How did the lessons learned in previous leadership challenges inform your planning for this activity?

Desired take-aways include an emphasis on the team's creative problem solving, team cooperation, communication skills and team spirit.