

Positive Learning Environment Unit: What You Have & How To Use It

Designed for High School PE – Cooperative Challenges & SEL Integration

Introduction

This unit promotes teamwork, cooperation, communication, and problem-solving through engaging activities that build a positive learning environment. Students develop social-emotional skills while maintaining MVPA and practicing leadership in inclusive settings.

Activities in This Unit

- Heads Up
- Cooperative Kickball
- Titanic
- Catapult
- Bumper Tag
- Capture the Flag
- Group Concentration
- Bucket Bounce
- The Island
- Human Knot

What You Have

Teacher resources to organize cooperative learning, assessment, and event management.

- Unit overview and daily lesson plans with learning targets and SEL objectives.
- ASAP warm-ups for quick engagement.
- Inclusion strategies and adaptations for diverse learners.
- Skill progressions for communication, trust, and problem-solving.
- Assessment toolkit: observation checklists, rubrics, self-reflection prompts.
- Peer coaching cards for feedback and encouragement.
- Reflection questions aligned to SEL competencies.
- Vocabulary and cooperative norms summaries.
- Teacher reflection prompts for continuous improvement.

Instructional Media

- Sample 15-day unit map (adaptable to 10–20 lessons).
- Printable station signs and cooperative challenge cards.
- Skill/task cards for communication and problem-solving.
- Leveled assessments with SEL integration.
- Limited equipment & large class adaptations.

Core Equipment by Activity

Activity	Standard Equipment	Low-Cost/DIY Substitutions
Heads Up	Foam balls	Paper balls or rolled socks
Cooperative Kickball	Kickball, bases	Playground ball, cones for bases
Titanic	Poly spots, mats	Paper plates, taped zones
Catapult	Buckets, balls	Laundry baskets, bean bags
Bumper Tag	Foam noodles	Rolled towels or pool noodles
Capture the Flag	Flags, cones	Bandanas, chalk lines
Group Concentration	Cards or printed prompts	Index cards
Bucket Bounce	Buckets, balls	Bins, playground balls
The Island	Mats, ropes	Cardboard squares, jump ropes
Human Knot	No equipment	N/A

How to Use It

Sequence activities to build trust and cooperation before culminating in a cooperative challenge day.

- Days 1–3: Intro to cooperative norms and communication games (Heads Up, Bumper Tag).
- Days 4–6: Medium complexity challenges (Cooperative Kickball, Titanic, Catapult).
- Days 7–9: Problem-solving and trust activities (Group Concentration, The Island).
- Days 10–12: Large group challenges (Capture the Flag, Bucket Bounce).
- Days 13–15: Culminating Cooperative Challenge Day with Human Knot and reflection.

Daily Flow (Prep → Set → Teach)

- Prep: Check space and equipment; post norms and objectives.
- Set: Quick warm-up; review cooperative cues; assign roles.
- Teach: Short bouts with reflection; rotate roles; close with SEL question.

Assessment & Evidence of Learning

- Observation checklists for teamwork and communication.
- Student self-reflection on cooperation and problem-solving.
- Peer feedback on group dynamics.
- Performance rubrics during culminating challenge.

Safety

- Ensure clear space; remove hazards.
- Teach stop/freeze signals and enforce them.
- Monitor physical contact; emphasize communication.
- Rotate roles to prevent fatigue and maintain engagement.

Limited Equipment / Large Class Ideas

- Use cones or tape for zones instead of mats.
- Replace balls with paper or foam alternatives.
- Divide class into grids; rotate groups every 5–7 minutes.

Reflection Questions

- How did your team communicate effectively today?
- What strategy helped your group solve the challenge?
- How did you support others during the activity?

Appendix A: Cooperative Challenge Rotation Template

Use this template for organizing stations and scoring.

Station	Round	Team	Score	Notes
	1			
	2			
	3			
	4			
	5			
	6			
	7			

Appendix B: Equipment Checklist

- Foam balls, cones, mats, ropes, poly spots
- Buckets, bean bags, cards, flags
- Station signs, score sheets, pencils