

What activity? At what time? With which group?

“You do not learn by doing,...you learn by thinking—acting—thinking—acting. etc. In and of itself, doing, like experiencing, can be a mindless affair.”

Seymour B. Sarason

“Sequencing means the correct selection of activities at any given time for any given group.”

Karl Rohnke, Cowstails and Cobras II

Introduction to Group Lead Initiatives (GLIs)

Group Led Initiatives (GLIs) are mini-problem solving challenges that a team works on from a written set of directions. Selecting the right GLI is the key to your success with group facilitation. Consider your goal then select the appropriate GLI. Use carefully considered debriefing questions to help the group learn from the activity.

Process

1. Multiple groups of 8-15 participants are ideal.
2. A single facilitator can monitor large groups (over 200 at a time).
3. Provide one copy of the GLI instructions to each group.
4. Each group monitors their own progress.
5. Processing can be done as an entire group, by small groups or by each individual depending upon the goal of the activity.

Leadership Concepts

Determine the goal prior to selecting the activity. Prepare your processing questions and processing technique based upon your specific goal.

- Communication Skills
- Goal Setting
- Organizational Skills
- Group Process/Group Roles
- Self-Awareness
- Decision Making

Sample Use and Processing Questions

Leadership Styles

After taking a leadership styles inventory, each group leads itself through a GLI. The GLI is processed using the following questions that relate back to the leadership survey.

1. What leadership styles did you see people playing in your group during the teambuilding activities?
2. Were there more product roles or process roles?
3. What role did you play?
4. As an individual, what strengths and weaknesses did you display?
5. Were there roles that nobody played that could have helped your team?
6. As a group, what are your teambuilding strengths?
7. As a group, what are your teambuilding weaknesses?

Sensitivity to Others

There are many ways a GLI could be used as a catalyst for a discussion on Sensitivity to Others. A GLI could be used as an anticipatory set for the concept or as a follow-up exercise to a presentation on Sensitivity to Others or an activity that accents different groupings.

1. How can you reach out to the different subcultures (groups of kids) in your school? Who are these subcultures?
2. Are you willing to reach out?
3. What sacrifices will you need to make?
4. What benefits will come from reaching out?
5. Why is it difficult to reach out to others?
6. When has someone reached out to you? How did it make you feel?

Decision Making

There are many decision-making opportunities for a group leading itself through a GLI. After teaching a few decision-making techniques (Fist to Five, Value Voting, Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down, Consensus), a group could practice these techniques through a GLI. A GLI is also a great introduction to the concept of decision-making.

1. How did your group make decisions?
2. Was it easy or challenging for your group to get on the "same sheet of music" and for all to agree?
3. What made it difficult or easy for your group?
4. What are some obstacles at school that make it difficult for your leadership team to make decisions?
5. What can you do, as a leadership team, to lessen the impact of these obstacles?
6. Who emerged as leaders in your group during the activity? Why do you think this happened?

Communication

Communication is a key component for a group leading itself through a GLI. After teaching a few communication techniques (Everyone Says, Talking Stick, Pros and Cons, SOFTEN Listening), a group could practice these techniques through a GLI. A GLI is also a great introduction to the concept of communication.

1. How did your group communicate during the activity?
2. Was it easy or challenging for your group to communicate with each other?
3. Did the group members all have the same idea as to how to best complete the task? Explain.
4. Were there some ideas from group members that were not voiced or heard?
5. What are some obstacles at school that make it difficult for your leadership team to communicate?
6. What can you do, as a leadership team, to lessen the impact of these obstacles?
7. Who emerged as leaders in your group during the activity? Why do you think this happened?

From
The Complete Ropes Course Manual
Karl Rohnke, Catherine Tait, Jim Wall
Effective Leadership in Adventure Programming,
Simon Priest, Michael A. Glass

Opening

- What are you hoping to get from today's experience?
- What do you perceive will be difficult for you today?
- What can you offer the group today?
- What is your typical role in groups?
- What kind of support do you need from your group today?
- For today to be a great experience for you and the group, what would need to happen?

Closing

- What beliefs about yourself and others were reinforced today?
- If you had one picture to take today what would it be of and why?
- What goals were you able to meet? Not able to meet?
- What specific memories will you take away from today's experience?
- What did you really appreciate or enjoy today?
- Was your experience beneficial? Why or why not?
- In what ways was your behavior typical, or atypical, of how you usually act in groups?
- How will you apply what you learned from today's experience?
- Is there anyone in the group you want to thank?

Leadership

- Who assumed leadership roles during the activity?
- What were the behaviors that showed leadership?
- Did the leadership role shift to other people during the activity?
- Who did you follow even if you weren't sure the leader's idea would work? Why?
- Was it difficult to assume a leadership role with this group?

Teamwork

- In what ways was your group cooperative?
- How did it feel to cooperate?
- In what ways was your group uncooperative?
- What strengths were evident in your group?
Weaknesses?
- What contributed to the success of your group?
- How does the group measure success?
- How can you cooperate in other areas of your life?

Feelings

- Can you name a feeling you had at any point in competing the activity?
- What was the main thought behind the feeling?
- Is that feeling a common one in your life?
- Did you express that feeling to others? If not, what did you do with the feeling?
- What types of feelings are easiest to express? Most difficult?
- What feelings were expressed nonverbally in the group?
- What feelings did you notice that the others were expressing?
What feelings were hardest to be around?

Listening

- Who made suggestions for completing the activity?
- Were all of these suggestions heard? Explain
- How did it feel to be heard or not heard when you made a suggestion?
What interfered with your ability to listen to others?
- How can you as a group overcome the obstacles to listening?
- Did you listen in the same way today as you generally do?

Trust

- What makes it difficult to trust? Yourself? Others?
- What behaviors and attitudes help you build trust?
- Which role is easier, the one trusting or being trusted?
- Can you give examples of when you trusted someone in the group? Explain
- What would the group look like, sound like and feel like if it were trusting?
- What can you do to help increase the trust level in the group?

Individual Differences

- In what ways are the group members similar? Different?
- How did your differences affect the group?
- How could the group learn and benefit from individual differences?

Responsibility

- What can you do to make a difference?
- How much control did you have today?
- Name three things that you want others to know, or ways that you'd like them to act differently?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how much responsibility did you take for the success of your group?

Activity: *Merry-Go-Round*

Directions:

Props: None

Using a variety of strategies as many times as you would like, attempt the following challenges:

- #1 Time how fast it takes your group to sing a round of "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" one word at a time with only one person in the group talking at a time. Everyone must say a word before someone can say a second word.
- #2 Time how fast it takes to send a "hand clap" around the circle three times. A five second penalty is added to the time if someone claps out of turn or at the same time as someone else. One person claps at a time, then the next person, then the next person...etc.
- #3 Using the same criteria as above...time the following:
 - a foot stomp
 - a pen/pencil on a notebook (5 seconds if pen falls off)
 - a handshake

Activity: *Line Up*

Directions:

Props: None

Using a variety of strategies as many times as you would like, attempt the following challenges:

- #1 Time how fast it takes your group to line up in the following orders...a five second penalty is added in the end for each person out of order. You must check your work!
 - alphabetical first name
 - alphabetical last name
 - alphabetical favorite food
 - alphabetical favorite music group
 - alphabetical favorite color
 - alphabetical favorite activity
 - alphabetical favorite animal
 - alphabetical favorite candy
- #2 Extra Challenges...
 - **Without talking...**line up by birthday day and month
 - **Without sight...** line up alphabetically by middle name

Activity: *In the News*

Directions:

Props: 3 sheets of newspaper per person

Give each person in the group three sheets of newspaper then attempt the following challenges:

- #1 Alpha Quest: Time how long it takes your group to find a word that begins with each letter of the alphabet. For the letters X, Q, and Z, you may count a word that has the letter in it, BUT if you do, you must add a 10 second penalty for each letter found this way.
- #2 Using only the three sheets of newsprint given to each person, completely cover your entire group with newspaper so no body parts can be observed
- #3 Using only the three sheets of newsprint given to each person, construct a free standing tower.

Activity: *Straw Power*

Directions:

Props: 1 straw per person

- a) Group stands up and forms a circle
- b) Hold straw in right hand, cross right arm over left arm in front of chest
- c) Using only tips of index fingers, hold straws up between each person
- d) Once in this position, **attempt to do the following challenges:**

- #1 As a group, make one complete walking rotation
- #2 Untwist your arms to face outward, then re-twist to come back inward
- #3 Move arms high and low
- #4 Sit down and stand up
- #5 Sing a chant or song while doing a Radio City Rockettes' kick
- #6 Create your own challenge!

Activity: *Balloon Frantic*

Directions:

Props: 1 balloon per group

- a) Group stands up and forms a circle holding hands. Blow up a balloon and tie it off
- b) In a controlled fashion, without breaking hands and without the balloon hitting the ground, **attempt to do the following challenges:**

- #1 Pass the balloon in a clockwise direction, then switch counterclockwise
- #2 Pass the balloon in any direction, but every third person must "hit" the balloon with only his or her head
- #3 Keep the balloon up only using feet...only using shoulders...only using elbows...only using knees...
- #4 Pass the balloon around in alphabetical order by first name...by last name
- #5 Create your own challenge!

Activity: *People Mover*

Directions:

Props: No props needed

- a) Group stands up and forms a circle then **attempts the following challenges:**

- #1 As quick as you can, form the following shapes with your bodies: a square...a rectangle...a triangle...a star...
- #2 By connecting your bodies and using your imagination, use everyone in your group to create... a vacuum cleaner...a bug zapper...a bowler at a bowling alley...Once you've tried the above, come up with your own idea then call a facilitator over to see if they can guess what you have made with your bodies.
- #3 a) Form a circle and hold hands. b) Without breaking hands, rotate 360 degrees clockwise, then 360 degrees counterclockwise (you might want to set down markers to help guide your 360 degree rotation). c) Pick someone in your group to time how fast it takes you to do these two complete rotations. d) Develop a strategy that allows you to complete this challenge the fastest.

Activity: *Pass the Can*

Directions:

Props: one #10 can per group or small bucket

Using only your feet, pass the can around the circle from person to person without the can touching the ground.

- a) As a group, sit down in a circle with your feet facing inside the circle.
- b) Pick someone in the circle to time how long it takes the group to pass the can around the circle one time.
- c) Each time the can touches the ground, add 5 seconds to your time.
- d) Compete against yourselves and try to improve your time.
- e) Stop after each attempt and brainstorm ideas of how the group might be able to go faster.

Activity: *The Sound of Music*

Directions:

Props: None

Attempt the following challenges:

- #1 On the count of three take a deep breath, and then start "humming." See who can hum the longest with just the one breath.
- #2 Each person in the group chooses a song to sing WITHOUT TELLING anyone what the song is. On the word "sing," all group members start singing their songs. During the activity, you may only sing. No talking is allowed. If you choose to stop singing your song and start singing someone else's song, link arms with them. The activity ends when everyone is singing the same song or small groups of people are singing songs that they don't want to change.
- #3 Pass a sound around the circle. Someone makes a sound and "throws" it to a person across the circle. That person "catches" the sound by making the same sound that was "thrown" to them. To continue the activity, the person who just "caught" a sound, now "throws" a new sound across the circle to another person who "catches" this new sound. For an advanced challenge, have more than one sound traveling around the circle.

Activity: *Engineers*

Directions: Using only the materials provided, attempt the following challenges.

Props: bag of assorted items: rubber bands, chenille stems, paper clips, band-aids, construction paper, tape, pencils, straws, etc. Challenge #4 utilizes a tub of water.

- #1 Connect the items to design something that can be stretched to cover the greatest distance.
- #2 Connect the items to design the tallest free standing structure.
- #3 Connect the items to design a small replica of a famous monument or building.
- #4 Connect the items to design something that will float.

Activity: *Word Chains*

Directions:

Attempt the following word challenges.

Props: Paper & Pencil for #3

- #1 As a group, pick a category: geography, sports, animals, music, or fruits and vegetables. One person starts the chain by stating a word in the category. The person to the right states another word in the category that starts with the last letter of the previously stated word. Continue the chain around the circle. For an extra challenge, send one category around to the circle to the left and one category around to the right.
- #2 Attempt to say each tongue twister together as a group. Try each one ten times in a row at the fastest rate possible: "Unique New York;" "Toy boat;" "Thick socks;" "Red leather, yellow leather;" "The big black bug bled black blood;" "She makes a proper cup of coffee in a copper coffee pot;" "Watch the wacky wristwatch;" "Six thick thistle sticks."
- #3 Write a letter to someone going around the circle one word/punctuation mark at a time starting with the word "Dear _____," and ending with the words, "Sincerely Yours _____." Attempt to write a grammatically correct letter that ends with the last person in the circle closing with, "Sincerely Yours." For an extra challenge, start a letter to the right AND to the left!

Activity: *Count Me In!*

Directions:

Attempt the following challenges:

Props: None

- #1 Use your bodies to form the shape of your Zip code one number at a time.
- #2 Without talking other than to say a number, count to the number that represents the amount of people in the group. Each person may only state one number during each attempt. Start with everyone looking at the ground. If two people say a number at the exact same time, the group needs to moan "Argggghhhh" in despair...then start the count over.
- #3 As a group count together to 30 with the following synchronized clapping pattern. After stating each multiple of three (3, 6, 9, 12, 18, 21, 24, 27), the group needs to clap once. After stating each multiple of five (5, 10, 20, 25), the group needs to clap twice. After stating each multiple of three and five (15, 30), the group needs to clap three times.

Activity: *Dramatics*

Directions:

Props: None

- #1 Complete each direction before reading the next one. a) As a group, select a category: sports, music, funny faces or professions. b) Choose three distinct motions & accompanying sounds that relate to the category. c) Practice the three motions/sounds as a group. d) Form a circle with everyone's back facing the center of the circle. e) On the count of three, everyone spins around and makes one of the three motions/sounds. d) WITHOUT TALKING...the goal is to get everyone in the group to make the same motion/sound. Continue to turn your backs to the center of the circle and spin on the count of three until all members of the group have the same motion/sound.
- #2 Build a machine with your bodies that completes a task. Each person in your group must be a part in the machine. A part must have a motion and a sound and it must interact with at least one other part.
- #3 Select a leader for the activity. The leader is the "person" and the other members of the group are the "mirrors." The mirrors should duplicate at the same time as accurately as possible whatever the leader does or says.

Activity: *The Dice is Right*

Directions:

Props: dice (two)

Attempt the following challenges.

- #1 Roll the dice. Based on the number showing, brainstorm a list of things the group has in common. Roll the dice three times.
- #2 Roll one die. Based on the number showing, form groups of that number as accurately as possible.
- #3 Number group members from 1 to 12 (if more than 12, pair up the extra people). Roll the dice. The person with the number showing must lead the group for 15 seconds making sounds and motions the group must imitate. Roll the dice ten times.
- #4 Number the group members from 1 to 12. Before rolling the dice, pick one of the following categories: TV shows, movies, athletes, musicians, state capitals, country capitals, lakes, mountain ranges, U.S. political leaders, or world political leaders. Roll the dice. The person with the number showing must name as many items related to the category as shown on the dice. The person will have twice the number of seconds showing on the dice to complete the task. Roll the dice ten times.

Activity: *Choices*

Directions:

Props: Talking Stick

Attempt the following challenge:

- #1 You must choose only one person in your group to receive a prize. Use Fist to 5 or Thumb Up/Thumb Down to make your decision.
Parameters:
 - The prize must not be shared.
 - The group must unanimously agree on its choice within the time limit. If the group does not reach consensus, no one receives the prize.
 - Only one person can speak at a time. Use the talking stick.
 - Once a decision has been made send the prizewinner to the facilitator.
 - Once the prizewinner is back in your circle, answer the questions below.

Questions

- 1) Describe the decision-making process? Was it easy or difficult? Why or why not?
- 2) Explain the feeling tone (attitude) of the group concerning the task.

Activity: *Step Dance Spotlight*

"If you can speak, you can sing; if you can walk, you can dance."

Bob Marley

Props: None

Introduction:

"Stepping is a dynamic and popular performance tradition among African-American fraternities and sororities...This complex performance event and ritual involves various combinations of dancing, singing, chanting and speaking, and draws on African-American folk traditions and communication patterns as well as material from popular culture...Stepping involves great creativity, intelligence, wit, and physical skill."

from "Stepping, Saluting, & Cracking: The Cultural Politics of African-American Step Shows" by Elizabeth C. Fine

Directions:

Create a 30 second (or less) group step dance routine. A step dance is a synchronized group routine that incorporates moves, sounds, and rhythms from the following sources: cheerleading, military, drill-team, hip-hop, break dancing, call-and-response, and almost anything from popular culture such as advertising, jingles, television theme songs and top 40 hits.

