

## TEAMWORK AND CONSENSUS

Adapted from parts of the El Paso ISD's Campus Improvement Team Teaching, Ed Henderson and the Napa County Schools and Spencer Kagan's Cooperative Learning

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### OBJECTIVE/RATIONALE

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Health care workers function as team members and work with people from diverse backgrounds. Quality health care depends on the ability to work well with others. The student will investigate the aspects of consensus and try to utilize that as a decision-making tool.

TEKS 121.3 5C, 9A

TAKS ELA 1  
Mathematics 1, 10

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### KEY POINTS

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- I. Individuals assume various roles when in a group
  - A. Some are elected to leadership roles (i.e. President VP, etc.)
  - B. More informal roles are assumed by all group members
    1. Information Seeker
      - a. Asks questions
      - b. Looks for new ideas
      - c. May sound doubtful
      - d. Is willing to research topics and issues
      - e. Is open to new ideas
    2. Tension Reliever
      - a. Encourages risk taking
      - b. Uses humor to relieve the tension
      - c. Maintains a steady, calming attitude
      - d. Looks for consensus during arguments
    3. Clarifier
      - a. Connects disparate ideas into new wholes
      - b. Creates visual interpretations of the data
      - c. Orders and organizes discussion items
      - d. Is an analytical and critical thinker
    4. Initiator
      - a. Organizes the discussion into a practical plan of action
      - b. Is good at assignment tasks and delegating actions
      - c. Is very goal and performance oriented
      - d. Is always enthusiastic and positive about the future
    5. Gatekeeper
      - a. Knows the rules in depth
      - b. Watches the clock
      - c. Keeps everyone in line

- d. Challenges new ideas
    - e. Needs to be convinced
  - 6. Harmonizer
    - a. Serves as the group cheerleader
    - b. Minimizes conflicts and differences of opinion
    - c. Looks out for the feelings of all group members
    - d. Is enthusiastic and caring
  - 7. Follower
    - a. Wants to do something concrete
    - b. Waits for the “experts” to tell him/her what to do
    - c. Always supports the initiators in the group
  - 8. Information Giver
    - a. Comes to all meetings with all the notes and hand-outs from previous meetings
    - b. Is always careful to state all the pertinent facts
    - c. Is very detailed oriented
    - d. Never forgets information but may forget how you felt about something
- C. Roles are determined by personalities, qualities, and values that we have as individuals. Some of the qualities include
  - 1. Trust
  - 2. Sensitivity
  - 3. Belief in Consensus
  - 4. Pride in Organization
  - 5. Value of Individual differences
  - 6. Apprehension of diversity
  - 7. Promptness
  - 8. Organization
  - 9. Enthusiasm
  - 10. Critical Thinking

## II. Consensus

- A. Parliamentary Procedure is the rule by majority
- B. Majority rule is the most effective if a consensus is reached
- C. The definition of consensus is a “collective opinion or concord – general agreement or accord”.
- D. There are some misunderstandings about consensus
  - 1. Consensus does not mean that everyone agrees with what is being done – it is simply a general agreement to carry on with something.
  - 2. Another misunderstanding is that all team decisions should be made by consensus
  - 3. Yet another is that the final consensus decision reflects the first choice of each team member
  - 4. That consensus is fast and easy
  - 5. And finally that consensus is compromise
- E. There are some general beliefs about consensus
  - 1. Consensus is a mind set as well as a process

2. Consensus that is authentic requires that team members be more concerned about community and less concerned about power
  3. Consensus requires that the team be more focused on team productivity than on individual credit
  4. Consensus demands mature behavior on the part of everyone
  5. The recognized leader holds him/herself and others accountable for open, honest participation
  6. The team must be open to continuous learning in order to use consensus effectively
- F. In order for consensus to be a viable option, ground rules must be established and followed
1. Disagreement is acceptable as long as the person explains why they disagree
  2. Expressed differences of opinion help to expose all available alternatives
  3. Rigid argument for one position should be avoided – all members reactions should be heard and considered
  4. One should never change his/her mind to avoid conflict; support should only be given to options that are truly accepted
  5. Evaluation should be suspended until all points of view are presented and understood
  6. Have a back-up plan in the event consensus cannot be reached. Examples include
    - a. No decision – idea is dropped and status quo continues
    - b. Third party decides
    - c. Leader decides
    - d. Designated committee decides
    - e. Luck decides
    - f. Split Decision – group supporting can pilot
    - g. Majority rules – or an agreed upon percentage
- G. Consensus Process
1. Issue is clarified
  2. Discussion of the issue
  3. Reclarify any parts of the issue
  4. Each individual gives their stance
  5. The minority expresses their view
  6. The team problem-solves the minority's view
  7. Again each individual gives their stance
- H. Levels of agreement in a group
1. 100% consensus
  2. Sufficient consensus
  3. Democratic (majority rules)
  4. Autocratic with input from the group
  5. Totally autocratic
- III. Some negative behaviors and distracters in group dynamics (Taken from the Ed Henderson of Napa County School)

- A. The latecomer
  - 1. arrives late
  - 2. makes a big commotion
  - 3. wants to be caught up on everything that has happened
  - 4. gives “reasons” why they were late
- B. The Early Leaver
  - 1. leaves session early
  - 2. drains energy from the session
- C. The Broken Record
  - 1. keeps bringing up the same point over and over
  - 2. takes up valuable time
- D. The Doubting Thomas
  - 1. aggressively negative
  - 2. uses phrases like “It will never work”
- E. The Dropout
  - 1. sits at back of room
  - 2. doesn’t say anything
  - 3. corrects papers, reads
  - 4. disturbs presenter more than group
- F. The Whisperer
  - 1. whispers constantly to neighbor
  - 2. irritating to group
  - 3. breaks concentration of group
- G. The Know-It-All
  - 1. uses credentials, age, length of service or status to argue a point
- H. The Loudmouth
  - 1. talks too much and too loud
  - 2. dominates the session
  - 3. pulls attention away from focus of session

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## ACTIVITIES

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- I. Rate the **Qualities of a Effective Team Member**. (Teacher note: Give each of the students a list of the qualities and have them rank them in the order of importance, from most – number 1 – to least – number 9. Have different people in the class give their first selection, second selection, etc. and explain why they made those choices. When class members see things differently, discuss how this reflects our different values – and therefore out different roles in the team. Relate it back to the roles that are posted around the room.)
- II. Complete **Lost on the Moon Activity**. (Teacher Note: 1. Divide the class into teams of about four-five. 2. Without talking within the group, the members are supposed to rank each of the fifteen items, number one being most important. 3. Next, using a different color pen, the group will rank the items in importance, Nobody can change their individual ranking once the group starts ranking. 4. Next ask the groups if they were able to come up with a ranking by consensus. Did any of the members have the same individual ranking as the group? Have

groups/members share the process they went through to achieve their ranking. Was consensus reached? Was the process positive? Ask if any leaders arose out of the group. Discuss any problems that they encountered. Have one or more groups share their rankings with the others, if you wish)

- III. Using the Answer Sheet, compare the rankings that NASA determined for these items. Mark the NASA rankings with a third color pen to see the differences.
- IV. Complete the **Who Shall Survive Activity**.
- V. Choose and complete **Sociology Activity #1** or **Activity #2**.
- VI. Complete **Ropes Activities**.

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### **MATERIALS NEEDED**

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Construction paper or poster board  
Lamination capability  
**Qualities of a Effective Team Member**  
**Lost on the Moon**  
**Answer Sheet for Lost on the Moon**  
**Sociology Activity #1** or **Activity #2**  
**Ropes Activities**

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### **ASSESSMENT**

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Group Work Rubric

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### **ACCOMMODATIONS**

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For reinforcement, the student will solve a given problem. (i.e. provide the student with a menu for a special celebration meal at the end of the year. Have them decide on the menu. Afterwards have them outline the process they used to reach the decisions and compare it with the process of consensus.

For enrichment, the student will design an evaluation sheet for assessing group process. (If they belong to a group such as Student Council, Key Club, etc., have them evaluate the group process in conducting a meeting. Write a one-page synopsis of finding.)

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### **REFLECTIONS**

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## QUALITIES OF AN EFFECTIVE TEAM MEMBER

\_\_\_\_\_ BELIEVES IN CONSENSUS

\_\_\_\_\_ PRIDE IN THE TEAM

\_\_\_\_\_ VALUES DIFFERENCES

\_\_\_\_\_ APPRECIATES DIVERSITY

\_\_\_\_\_ SENSITIVE TO OTHERS

\_\_\_\_\_ PROMPT AND ORGANIZED

\_\_\_\_\_ ENTHUSIASTIC

\_\_\_\_\_ TRUSTS PEOPLE

\_\_\_\_\_ CRITICAL THINKER

## LOST ON THE MOON

Taken from Spencer Kagan's Cooperative Learning, Chapter 8 : Teambuilding

You are in a space crew originally scheduled to rendezvous with a mother ship on the lighted surface of the moon. Mechanical difficulties, however, have forced your ship to crash-land at a spot some 200 miles from the rendezvous point. The rough landing damaged much of the equipment aboard. Since survival depends on reaching the mother ship, the most critical items available must be chosen for the 200 mile trip. Below are listed 15 items left intact after landing. Your task is to rank them in terms of their importance to your crew in its attempt to reach the rendezvous point. Place number 1 by the most important item, and so on through number 15, the least important.

**Step 1: Individual ranking.** Each member of the team is to individually rank each item. Do not discuss the situation or the problem until each member has finished the individual ranking. Once discussion begins do not change your individual ranking.

**Step 2: Team ranking.** After everyone has finished the individual ranking, rank in order the 15 items as a team.

<b>Box of matches</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Food concentrate</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>50 feet of nylon rope</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Parachute silk</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Portable heating unit</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Two .45 caliber pistols</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>One case dehydrated milk</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Two 100-pound tanks of Oxygen</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Stellar map (Moon's Constellation)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Life raft</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Magnetic compass</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>5 gallons of water</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Signal flares</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>First-aid kit containing injection needles</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Solar-powered FM Receiver-transmitter</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>

## **ANSWER SHEET: LOST ON THE MOON**

The following is the ranking of NASA for the exercise Lost on the Moon. Taken from Spencer Kagan: Cooperative Learning.

<b>Box of matches</b>	15
<b>Food concentrate</b>	4
<b>50 feet of nylon rope</b>	6
<b>Parachute silk</b>	8
<b>Portable heating unit</b>	13
<b>Two .45 caliber pistols</b>	11
<b>One case dehydrated milk</b>	12
<b>Two 100-pound tanks of Oxygen</b>	1
<b>Stellar map (Moon's Constellation)</b>	3
<b>Life raft</b>	9
<b>Magnetic compass</b>	14
<b>5 gallons of water</b>	2
<b>Signal flares</b>	10
<b>First-aid kit containing injection needles</b>	7
<b>Solar-powered FM Receiver-transmitter</b>	5

## Who Shall Survive?

### Group Directions:

Your group are members of a department in Washington, D.C. that is in charge of experimental stations in the far outposts of civilization. Suddenly the Third world War breaks out and bombs begin dropping . . . nuclear and biological. Places all across the globe are being destroyed. People are heading for whatever fallout shelters are available. You receive a desperate call from one of your experimental stations, asking for help.

It seems that there are 12 people, but there is only enough space, air, food, and water in their fallout shelter for 7 people for a period of 3 months, which is how long they estimate they can safely stay in the fallout shelter. They realize that if they have to decide among themselves, which 7 should go into the shelter, they are likely to become irrational and begin fighting. So they have decided to call your department, their superiors, and leave the decision to you. They will abide by your decision.

But each of you has to quickly get ready to head down to your own fallout shelter. So all you have time for is to get superficial descriptions of the 12 people. You have 15 minutes to make your decision. Then you will have to go to your own shelter.

So, as a group you now have 15 minutes to decide which 5 of the 12 people will have to be eliminated from the shelter. Before you begin, I want to impress upon you two important considerations. It is entirely possible that the 7 people you choose to stay in the shelter might be the only 7 people left to start the human race over again. This choice is, therefore, very important. Prepare a group consensus for your group by crossing out the 5 that your group would eliminate. Make the best choices possible. If you do not make a choice in 15 minutes, then you are, in fact, choosing to let the 12 people fight it out among themselves, with the possibility that more than 5 might perish. You have exactly 15 minutes to decide. Here is all you know about the 12 people.

## The People

1. A 16 year-old girl of questionable I.Q. (intelligence), a high school dropout, pregnant, unwed.
2. A policeman with gun, thrown off the police force for brutality.
3. A clergyman, 75 years old.
4. A 36 year-old female physician, unable to have children.
5. A 46 year-old male violinist, served seven years in jail for pushing narcotics, has been out of jail for six months.
6. A 20 year-old Black militant, no special skills.
7. A 39 year-old former prostitute, retired for 4 years.
8. An architect, homosexual.
9. A 26 year-old male law student.
10. The law student's 25 year-old wife; spent the last 9 months in a mental hospital; still heavily sedated. They refuse to be separated.
11. Famous historian-author, 42 years old.
12. Hollywood starlet, singer-dancer, 24 years old, confirmed alcoholic.

## Sociology Activity #1

Assume that you are part of a group that is shipwrecked on a deserted tropical island. The island has a plentiful supply of wild fruits and plants, insects, birds, fish and hardwood trees. Some fresh water can be found in small island pools, but the bulk of the water is contaminated by salt from the ocean. Your group had time to rescue the following items from your sinking ship before escaping in two life rafts:

- 2 large fishing knives
- 4 plastic gallon jugs of water
- 1 25-foot rope
- 1 large plastic tarp
- 1 set of binoculars
- 1 can opener
- 20 cans of fruits and vegetables

Establish a set of rules, procedures, and task assignments that would allow the group to survive on the island indefinitely. Each group will share their list and explain how they came to agree to this.

## Sociology Activity #2

Imagine that an amazing discovery leads you to explore a new frontier region. You do not know whether it will be hot or cold, dry or wet, barren or vegetated, populated or unpopulated. You can bring only EIGHT items with you. You do not know how long you will be there. Working in a group, select the eight items most necessary for your survival.

Pickax	Swiss Army knife	binoculars
Powdered milk	8 gallons of water	camping manual with first aid kit
Raft	tape recorder	large tent
Compass	radio transmitter	200 feet nylon rope
6 wool blankets	10 lbs freeze dried dinners	parachute

Did a leader emerge in your group? Who?  
How did the leader achieve his or her status?

Describe any instances of conflict in your group.

How were the conflicts resolved?

How was order maintained in your group?

What were the final items chosen and why?

# ROPES ACTIVITIES

## Human Rope

The purpose of this activity is to promote teamwork. The game never turns out the same so any participants that state that they already know how to do it should be encouraged to join in the fun.

Instruct all members of the group from (6-16 people) to place their hands in the middle of the circle and to grab the hand of another member...it should not be the hands of someone next to them. Then instruct the group to untie the human knot without letting go hands and to form a circle.

Did they work as a team?

Did someone immediately take charge?

Discuss what was hard and what was easy?

If the team decides to do it again...how did it turn out differently?

## Human Knot

Equipment: Group of people

Purpose: To promote teamwork

Goal: For the team to un-knot themselves without letting go of hands.

Rules:

1. Instruct all members in the group to form a tight circle and to grab the hands of two other members not standing next them.
2. Then instruct the group to untie the human knot without letting go hands and to form a circle.
3. After giving the group time discuss were they successful?  
Did they work as a team?  
Did someone immediately take charge?  
What was hard what was easy?  
If the team decides to do it again.... how did it turn out differently?
4. The game never turns out the same, so any participate whom states that they already know how to do it should be encouraged to join the fun.

## Shape it / Form it

Equipment: Blindfolds for most all the participates

A long rope or a really long extension cord that is connected

Purpose: Group to practice their verbal skills and teamwork

Goal: For student to form a shape with the rope by communicating verbally while Blindfolded.

Rules:

1. Instruct students to spread themselves out
2. Each student should be holding onto a section of the rope
3. Students should then lay down the rope and put on their blindfolds
4. Student then needs to pick up the rope in front of them
5. Instruct the group to form a shape such as a triangle, square, star, horseshoe, rectangle, etc...
6. When the group thinks that they have formed the shape correctly have the students lay the rope on the floor, step back and remove the blindfold and observe the results.
7. Discuss how the team worked together, who took charge...did everybody agree with the plan.

## Trust Walk

Equipment: Blindfolds for the team members  
Obstacle course of some kind...can be chairs, trees, poles...

Purpose: For students to gain experience in the use of their verbal skills  
For students to gain experience in being a leader of a group  
For students to gain trust in leaders

Goal: For the leader to take students blindfolded on a walk through an  
Obstacle course of some kind using their using only their verbal  
Communication skills.

### Rules:

1. Students need to form a straight line
2. Students need to place blindfolds over eyes
3. Select one student to act as leader (you can pick anyone, but you may want to pick one of the really quiet students)
4. The student who acts as leader will remove their blindfold
5. Students in line should hold onto the shoulder of the student in front of them.
6. Then have the leader follow you through an obstacle course with the leader verbally calling out directions for the student to follow...students further down the line should also be giving those same directions to the people behind them for safety purposes.
7. At the end of the walk discuss what the leader did well and what the leader could possibly improve on with their verbal skills to have made it easier for the group.
8. Discuss with the group how it felt to be blinded and having to trust this person as the leader.
9. At any time during the walk you may mute another member if they seem to be taking over.

## Shape it and Form it

The purpose of this activity is for members of the group to practice their verbal communication skills and teamwork. To do this activity you will need blind folds for all of the members. You will also need a long rope or you could use a really long extension cord that is connected in a circle. Instruct the students to put the blind folds on. Then instruct students to pick up the rope and hold it in their hands. Then tell the group the shape that they are trying to form for example a triangle, a square, a star, rectangle, a horseshoe etc. When the group thinks they have formed the shape correctly have student remove blindfolds and look at the results for themselves. Discuss how the teamwork together, who took charge...did the others agree with the plan. To change up the game you may want to have a couple of the students participate without wearing blindfolds so they can see what is going on but they are muted and cannot tell anyone else what is going on.

## Trust walk

This activity can be done either outside or inside. To do this activity you need blindfolds for most of the members of the group. The purpose of this activity is for students to gain experience in the use of their verbal skills. Instruct students to form a single line and to put blindfolds on. Feel free to change who is the leader and to rearrange the line. Then allow the person who is at the beginning of the line to follow you on walking through an obstacle course. Students in the line should have their hands on the person's shoulders in front of them for the remainder of the walk and may call out instructions that were given to them to those behind them. This can be a real boost in the leader's self-esteem to see the others trusting them as a leader. At the end of the walk discuss what the leader did well and what they could possibly improve on to have made it easier for their group. If time allows change leaders. At any time during the walk you may mute another member if they seem to be taking over.