

Intended for Grades: 4-12 **Est. Time:** 20-45 min.

Lesson Title: STICKING TOGETHER

Lesson Purpose: Students will:

- * Experience how working together as a team can be challenging
- * Learn about effective team collaboration and communication

Materials & Preparation:

- * Wooden dowels – 3/8” by 4’ (4-6 students per stick, depending on age/size)
Option - lightweight hula-hoops can be used instead of a dowel or long, light stick

Background Information:

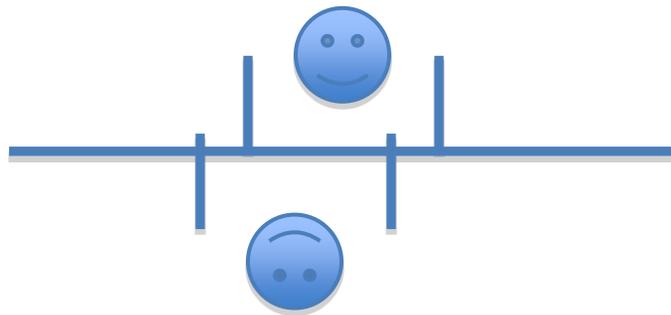
Learning how to work together is critical in this day and age, as reflected in both the Hawaii DOE General Learner objectives (Community Contributor, Effective Communicator) and the 21st Century Learning skill of collaboration.

Middle school students are very social and peer interactions are important at this age. Working in groups is appealing to many middle school students, yet sometimes challenging for teachers to facilitate.

Taking adequate time in the beginning of the year to teach expectations and model how to appropriately communicate within a group. The dialogue about what was learned from this experience is most important, as it offers a time to create concrete protocols for positive collaboration. Co-creating protocols can help students enjoy successful group work with any partners.

Steps:

1. The facilitator can introduce this activity by holding up a wooden dowel. Explain that students may think it is an ordinary stick but it is more than a wooden dowel, as this stick usually defies gravity.
2. Use each index finger to hold the dowel with outstretched arms in front of your torso at waist height. Show them that with one person, it is easy to lower the stick to the ground. Share it’s not as much fun as having another person help bring the stick down.
3. Have two people stand on each side of the dowel and balance the stick with their index fingers; each person has one finger on the outside and one on the inside.



4. Ask this pair to bring the stick down to the ground, with the rule that their four pointer fingers must stay in contact with the stick. If contact is broken, they must return to waist height.

5. Have a small group of 4-6 students stand to demonstrate lining up to try this activity. The number of students per pole depends on student size and pole length. The more students per pole, the more challenging the activity gets.

6. Discuss protocols and assign places where student groups will have enough space to try this activity. (Going outside to an appropriate location may be beneficial for this activity.)

Note: The stick feels like it is floating in the air and it takes a coordinated effort from all team members to bring the stick down to the ground. Informal team leaders emerge as the team tries to lower the gravity defying stick. Students will learn that everyone concentrating on the same goal will help them find success.

7. After the activity: Create a poster with students of positive protocols that will help them work together well. You may want to brainstorm ideas and then synthesize down to some key concepts to post.

Reflection questions:

- * *What did you learn from this activity?*
- * *Why is it important to learn how to work well with others?*
- * *What values did your group demonstrate while working together?*
- * *What needs to happen to help project groups, learning teams, classes, athletic teams, student councils, or any other group work successfully together?*
- * *What characteristics make learning communities effective and collaborative?*

Resources:

<http://wilderdom.com/games/descriptions/HeliumStick.html>



A regular hula hoop can be used instead of a light stick.