ABSTRACT

TITLE:	Ropes Courses Help Build Group Cohesion, Resulting in More Effective Group Endeavors
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ABSTRACT: Ropes courses, also referred to as challenge courses, are ubiquitous today, particularly given their accessibility and suitability to a variety of educational, recreational, and therapeutic settings such as school districts, mental hospitals, and urban recreation programs. Analogous to obstacle courses, ropes courses consist of a series of physical and mental challenges, many of which require individual and group focus, group problem solving, and team building to complete. Group cohesion, defined as a measure of how well a group performs together, is essential to these performance tasks, particularly to be successful. This quantitative study examined whether ropes courses help groups form group cohesion. Subjects consisted of players from the Fort Lewis College baseball team. The baseball team, consisting of a majority of new players, was split into two study groups, one of which completed a low ropes course experience and the other of which did not. Each person (from both groups) was surveyed three times for group cohesion using the Group Cohesion Evaluation Questionnaire (GCEQ). Results imply that the group participating in the low ropes course had exponentially increased their cohesion, while the other group showed little to no increase. This suggests ropes courses have the potential to contribute to group cohesion and should be considered when selecting group development interventions.