



# Strategies

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# There Is No “I” In Team: Engaging Everyone

By Kimberly Maljak

**R**esearch has shown that motivation to be involved, engaged, and committed to learning stems from the three basic psychological needs of self-determination theory: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Students tend to have higher levels of engagement when they have autonomy and opportunities to make their own choices, which leads to a sense of ownership. Creating different roles within a team provides opportunities for all team members (not just the captains or coaches) to make decisions. Staying involved in the decision-making process provides a sense of ownership and belonging within the group or team. Furthermore, as students learn various roles for being part of a team, their competence increases, leading them to take more positive risks and expand their leadership skills.

The idea of creating separate roles, specifically committees, was inspired by a dance team, but it can be adopted by any sport team. Each team will not necessarily have the same concept; however, utilizing other team members to make connections among teammates and have personal responsibilities will increase autonomy and a sense of belonging. It not only engages all members but allows the coaches and captains to focus on key items and tasks, while still being involved in the day-to-day activities.

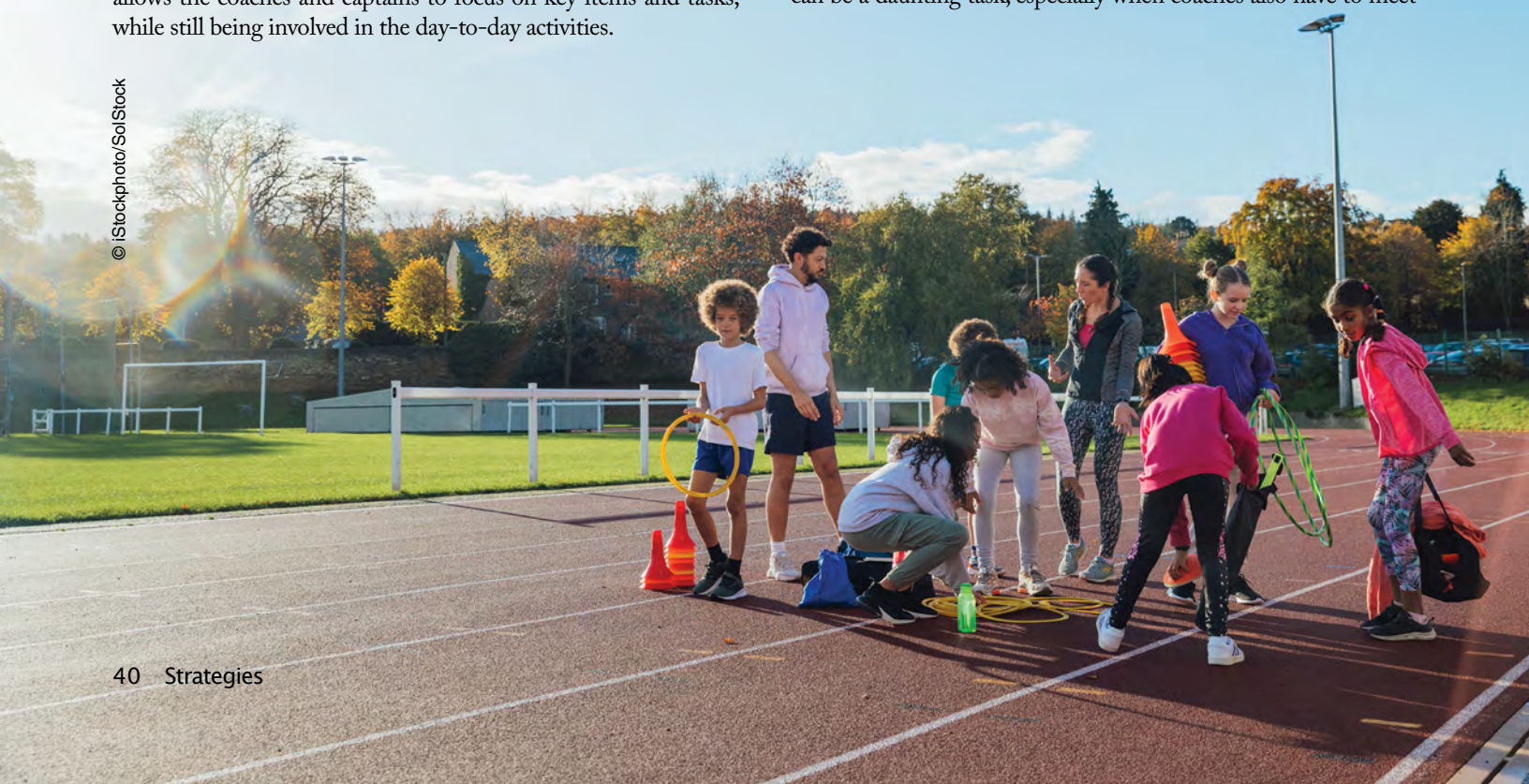
As the coach, decide what committees you need for your team and create a list of the responsibilities for each committee. Invite team members to rank the preferred committees they wish to be part of using a survey. Then, you could place each team member by seniority and preference. For this particular dance team, the coaches and captains invited upperclassmen who have been on the team for 2 years to head each of the committees, providing a leadership opportunity, as they have a stronger understanding of team expectations. The coaches and captains were each assigned one committee to oversee, and then met with the heads of the committees to discuss roles and responsibilities.

### Team Committees

The following committees were decided on based on the needs of this specific dance program. Other programs should tailor this idea to the needs of their school and/or program.

#### *Equipment committee*

As a coach, arriving to practice to set up all the equipment early can be a daunting task, especially when coaches also have to meet





with the athletic director, deposit fundraising money, place uniform orders, or tend to student needs. Therefore, having a committee who sets up all equipment is extremely efficient. The head of this committee created a schedule for each weekday practice. The members of the committee rotate who will retrieve equipment and set it up, and who will return equipment at the end of practice. On game days, or for community performances or competitions, the committee is responsible for bringing all equipment and extra items to the events, allowing the coaches and captains to oversee scheduling, transportation, meals, registration, and game-day checklists (a list of all items needed for the upcoming event sent by the captain the night before an event).

### ***Social media and music committee***

The desire to be a coach comes from a passion for the sport and the enjoyment of working with and teaching youth and young adults. A coach's job is to focus on skill development, growth of the program, and getting their team's name and brand recognized. Therefore, it might be challenging to keep up with the team's social media accounts. Creating a committee to post on the team's socials will keep the program recognized; promote games, performances, and events; connect with alumni; and increase the number of followers.

This committee can also help with programs that need music edited or a playlist created. They can learn the tools needed to edit music through the use of online resources such as the social platform called BandLab (2024). The committee can also create a playlist on Spotify to share with teammates to get pumped up for games or to play during pregame and team warmups.

### ***Party planning committee***

Being part of a team should not be all work and no fun. After all, that is a main reason why some students try out to be on a team; they want to socialize and be part of a community. It is the responsibility of the coach to plan practices, stick to game schedules, attend competitions, and seek other opportunities to be involved with the school and community. Furthermore, it is up to the coach to create a safe space, build community, and engage students in team building and team bonding experiences. However, it can be challenging to think about social events outside of an already demanding schedule. No need to stress! The party planning committee can plan monthly social gatherings and celebrate birthdays.

Events can range from inexpensive and low key, to planning a group outing that might be costly. Some ideas include but are not limited to a picnic on campus or at the beach, team dinners before and/or after a game, a visit to a local museum or monument in the area, dressing up and making dinner reservations for a fun night out, and many more! For birthdays, simply order a pack of birthday cards on Amazon, have the entire team sign the card, and make a birthday announcement before or after practice. You can add extra fun items in the envelope, such as stickers or school swag.

### ***Donations and fundraising committee***

Need money for team uniforms, travel, and equipment? Many teams face the same challenge, and coaches feel the pressure to

fundraise and acquire donations from local businesses while managing the budget provided by the school. This committee is tasked with generating fundraiser ideas and then executing them with the team (they will need some guidance, of course). First, they should create a list of the top five organizations to fundraise with and the rationale as to why they would benefit the team. Then, assign the head of the committee to be the point of contact to communicate with the selected fundraising organization. This simple assignment will help limit the number of emails and phone calls for the coaches. The head of the committee will work with the social media committee to post the fundraiser and help maximize funds raised. Once the fundraiser is completed, the head of the committee will close out the fundraiser and report back with results.

Furthermore, the committee can create a donations document to deliver to local businesses. The document should clearly state who the funds are for, how the funds will be used, possibly a photo of the team, and any perks they will receive for their donations. For example, you might give the organization a signed team photo, school swag, or a shout out on social media. In addition, this document can be posted on social media to reach friends and families of team members who might wish to donate. It is helpful for the committee to do the "leg work." In other words, they should visit the local businesses, speak to a manager, gather contact information, and then follow up via email or phone call to answer any questions.


## **Team Wrap-Up**

Once these committees are operating independently, be sure to check in with the head of each committee to get updates and offer feedback. Allow committees to make biweekly or monthly reports to the team so everyone understands what progress is being made. Invite team members to help other committees and offer suggestions for improvements. Overall, the idea of creating committees and specifically describing the tasks and responsibilities for each group has improved the morale and rapport among team members, decreased pressure on the captains to fulfill all roles, allowed team members to work closely with coaches, and formed a stronger sense of belonging within this dance team.

## **Disclosure Statement**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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