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Pedagogy of Place  
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## **Community Building**

**Name of the initiative/activity:** Hot Chocolate River

**Directions:** (this group initiative and the text of the directions is from <http://www.ultimatecampresource.com/site/camp-activity/hot-chocolate-river.html>)

Lay two ropes on the ground parallel to each other, about 20 feet apart. Have the students line up on one side of the rope, and tell them that they are looking at a giant hot chocolate river. They must get thier entire team across the hot chocolate river, but it is too hot to swim across, and too deep to walk across. (Obviously, they cannot walk around the river, since it does not end just because the ropes do).

The only way to get across is by using the large, fluffy marshmallows that you provide (such as carpet squares, poly spots or paper plates).

Give the students about eight or nine carpet squares, so that they have enough to get across with one or two left over.

Unfortunately, the current in the river is so strong that it actually sweeps the marshmallows away if someone is not holding them down (with a hand, foot, or other safe appendage). Also, the marshmallows swell up once they are placed in the river, and they become too heavy to move again, so they must remain where they are placed.

### **Materials needed:**

- 2 ropes
- “Marshmallows” - carpet squares, paper plates, or something else that is flat and suitable to step on
- Large enough space (gym or field)

### **Ideas for when to do it on the Field Study**

This group initiative will work well at the end of the second day of Fall Intersession. It connects with the theme of intersession (Charting Your Course) and the seminar article that the students received on the first day (breaking out of your comfort zone).

At this point, the students would have an idea of the daily work and larger projects that they are expected to complete during intersession and may be feeling a bit overwhelmed. Students could already be in a state of unhealthy anxiety and need guidance into “optimal anxiety.”

The group initiative will set the stage for positive cooperation and collaboration with their groups and overall 9th grade community when tackling the work of intersession and high school overall.

### **AOP Questions for debrief**

- What was the purpose of this group initiative?
- What were the greatest challenges in crossing the course? What caused you stress or anxiety?
- What did we do well? What strategies helped you successfully navigate the river?
- What could we do better next time?
- How does this relate to navigating through high school?
- Take a moment to reflect on a positive character trait that someone demonstrated during the initiative that you might want to acknowledge later.