



Cups, Strings, and Rubber Bands

Introduction

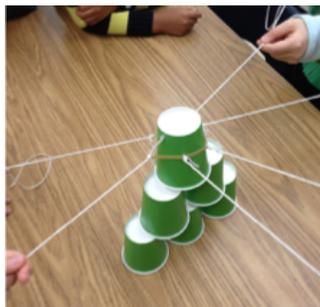
This is a great activity to facilitate teamwork, while also incorporating other Essential Skills like perseverance, agility and leadership. Students will need to work together to arrange their cups into a pyramid without touching the cups with their hands or another part of their bodies.

Materials

- Disposable cups
 - Classic plastic solo cups work well, but plain sturdy paper cups are also good. It's best to avoid foam or other insulated cups with a "sticky" exterior (although a great option if you want to challenge the group)
- String, cut in 2-3 foot lengths
- Rubber Bands

Instructions

- Prepare the rubber bands ahead of time by tying the ends of 4-5 strings to each rubber band (plan on one string per student in the group). Try to space the strings evenly around the rubber band.
- Divide the group into smaller groups of 4-5 students.
- Distribute the following supplies to each group:
 - Rubber band with strings attached
 - Stack of six cups
- Instruct the students that they are to complete the following challenge:
 - Build a pyramid out of the cups by stacking them with three on the bottom, two in the middle, and one on the top.
 - Each student will grab one of the strings attached to the rubber band and they should work together to pull the band apart to go around a cup and then release it enough to pick-up and move each cup. (For an added challenge, you can skip this instruction and leave it to them to figure out the method on their own).
- Students are not allowed to touch the cups with their hands or any other part of their bodies, even if a cup falls over or on the floor.
- If students have extra time, they can continue to use their technique to disassemble their pyramid and stack the cups back up. They could also time themselves with a goal of improving upon their previous time.





Discussion

- What did you do to contribute to the teamwork on your team?
- Was anyone frustrated during the activity? If so how was it handled?
- What did you learn about yourself and your other teammates?
- Why was teamwork so important for this activity?
- What can be so hard about teamwork? What can be great about teamwork?
- What are some other skills needed to be able to collaborate effectively?
- What are some situations where you must use teamwork?
- How will you use what you learned through this experience in situations outside the challenge?
- What other Essential Skills did you use today?

Reflecting & Connecting

- This activity might be easy for some groups but others might find it more challenging (or even frustrating). Use this observation to explain that working together isn't always easy but you have to adjust (agility) and continue to try (perseverance) as new strategies and solutions are shared.
- When teams are assembled and given a task, some people naturally emerge as leaders – they might take charge and offer ideas right away. Others may not be as vocal and prefer to be told what to do. Either way, students need to understand that every team member plays a role in accomplishing the goal. Students should think about how they can best contribute to the success of a team.
- If one team member is not paying attention, the entire cup stack can be knocked over. Teamwork requires 100% engagement.
- A good team member listens to their teammates. A good team member encourages everyone in the group to contribute, in some way. A good team member respects their teammates and is open to ideas being offered.