

Tower of Cups

Age: Around 5th grade and up

Context of activity:

Use before a small or large group activity in order to present the idea that the in order to accomplish the set goals, it is important to utilize the resources that everyone brings to the group, not just one individual. The ability of the group is greater than that of one individual.

Set-Up:

As students are sitting at their seats, either as an individual or within a group, they are given two cups and told to “*create the largest tower possible with the given materials.*”

They may change the cups in whatever way they would like, using whatever outside tools they want, but their goal is to create a tower that only contains cups, that is the largest tower possible.

During Activity:

- Allow students to move around space as they please
- As long as the activity is safe, try to allow most situations to play out
- Reiterate goal: “Create the largest tower possible with the given materials.”
- Try to answer most questions by reiterating the goal of this activity

Processing:

The goal of the processing is to get at the idea that in order for the group to be successful in this activity, everyone needed to pool their resources (cups) together to create the largest tower possible. This same idea can be brought into other activity and situations in and out of the classroom. *(These are just a few sample questions that can be used to get the group thinking about what happened during the activity)*

- What was the goal of the activity? Were we successful? What made it successful for unsuccessful?

- What did you see and hear during this activity? Were they helpful to the group's success or did those actions and sounds take away from the group's success? How? Why?
- What was difficult in this activity for you personally? For the group?
 - What could have made those difficulties easier?
- How can this activity be connected to other activities and situations?

Follow-Up Activity:

As a group, create a list of what should be seen and heard during group work (try to keep this list positive, "should," instead of negative, "should not"). This list can be posted in the room to be referenced before and during group activities to allow groups to be reminded of the importance of group work, along with what their group work should look and sound like.