

Michael Miller

July, 2015

Product Name: S&O Group Initiative - Spaghetti Challenge



SPAGHETTI CHALLENGE

Academic/Group Dynamics Connections

- Setting goals / time keeping
- Making a plan / being flexible
- Staying focused/supporting the group
- Assessing results / reflecting on successes
- Imagining alternatives / stating opportunities for growth

What you need

- 20 pieces of uncooked spaghetti pasta
- One meter of tape
- One meter of string
- One marshmallow (which must remain intact)

What to Do

In this community building activity, groups of 4-5 learners will use 20 pieces of uncooked spaghetti, one meter of tape, one meter of string, and one large marshmallow (which must remain intact) to build a freestanding tower that supports the marshmallow at the highest possible height. *Feel free to come up with your own wacky story to provide context to this challenge. Incorporate names like “Marta” or “Barb” often.*

Planning/Goal setting: 5 minutes

Instruct the group that they have 5 minutes, prior to handling materials, to plan for construction and to set goals. Plans and goals should be written on a worksheet to be provided. Plans for construction should include possible diagrams, group member roles, and a time line for what needs to happen and when. Ask for examples of personal and group goals. *Our group goal is to use all the materials provided. My personal goals are to keep my voice low and stay positive.* A group goal may or may not include a target height of their structure. Collect sheets, review during activity, and be prepared to use plans and goals as the foundation of AOP.

Construction: 18 minutes

After the five minutes has passed collect papers planning/goals worksheet.

AOP Questions:

1. What different leadership qualities were demonstrated during this activity? Which were the most valuable?
2. What were some of the struggle spots in your efforts and what might you do differently if you were to approach this task again – in the same group? In a different group?
3. What was the plan you first came up with? Did you stick with the plan? Why or why not?
4. What was the group goal? Did you meet it? Exceed it? Why or why not?
5. What were individual goals? Did you meet or exceed them? Why or why not?
6. When have you deviated from a plan? When can plans be compromised? Adjusted? Revised?
7. When have you revised a goal? When can goals be compromised? Adjusted? Revised?
8. What are goal/s do you have that are non negotiable? What are your plan/s for ensuring those goals are met?

Variations:

- Some time into the building phase of the activity (5-10 minutes) turn the lights down low, play loud music, or offer another similar distraction for students to manage.
- Some time in into the building phase of the activity (5 minutes) pull one member from each group and start an additional group, no planning, no preparation, just go.
- Vary materials. For example, provide some groups with limited materials as suggested and provide other groups with unlimited resources. Allow groups to trade materials. Offer to groups the opportunity to select one item from a collection of options. For example, select one from the following: Styrofoam cup, 3 inches of duct tape, small bar of soap, 3 full length pencils, 5 small marshmallows

Planning/Goal setting worksheet can be made as you see fit. The following questions prompts should help.

1. Explain how you're your has decided to go about building this tower. Explanation may include directions, group roles, construction plans and or diagrams.

2. State 1-3 goals for the group. For each group member state 1-2 individual goals.

1-3 group goals:

- -
- -
- -

Group member goals

- -
- -
- -
- -