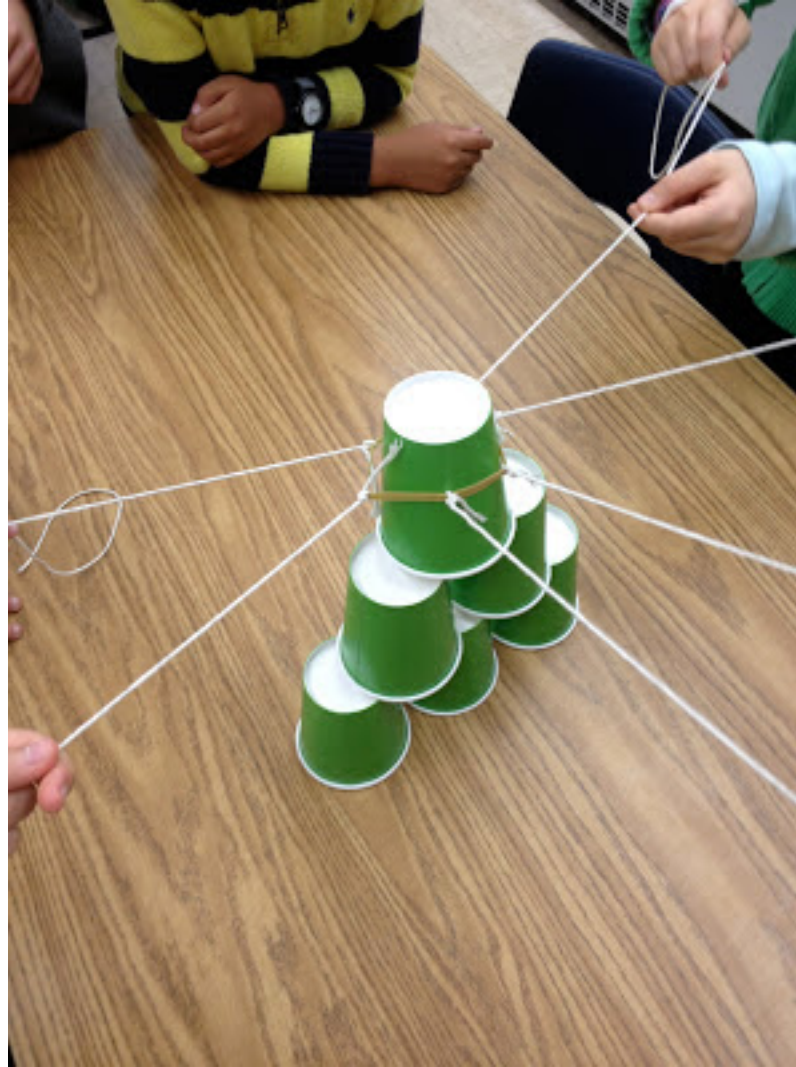


Teamwork: Cup Stack

I stumbled across this idea on Pinterest and thought it would be perfect for my third and fourth graders! I often hear complaints from students that although others "allow" them to play games at recess, they often do not "include" them in the game. For example, in football they are on the team but the ball is never passed to them. I used this as a springboard for discussion on what teamwork really looks like.

The Cup Stack is a great activity to facilitate teamwork. Some groups are able to complete the task very quickly while other groups must keep trying and trying to complete the task successfully. It's hard not to give up when things get frustrating, and this is a valuable lesson for children to learn in a safe environment. All you need is cups, rubberbands, and string. I decided to put my students into groups of 6, so I tied 6 equally spaced strings (about 1-2 feet long) around a single rubberband. Each group was given this device and 6 cups.

The challenge is for the group to build a pyramid out of the paper cups (3 on the bottom, 2 in the middle, 1 on the top - can be adjusted for more cups). Group members cannot touch the cups with their hands or any other part of their bodies, even if a cup falls over or on the floor. Each person holds onto one of the strings that are attached to the rubber band and they use this device to pick up the cups and place them on top of each other (by pulling the rubber band apart and then bringing it back together over the cups).



Some groups took 2 minutes to accomplish their goal, some 10 minutes, and some never successfully built their tower. I had groups that finished early watch the remaining groups to add a little "pressure." Afterwards we debriefed with the following discussion questions:

- Was anyone frustrated at all during the activity? If so how was it handled?
- What did you learn about yourself or others?
- Why was teamwork so important for this activity?
- What is so hard about teamwork?
- What did you do today to contribute to the teamwork on your team?
- What are some skills needed to be good at teamwork?
- Are you every in a situation where you must use teamwork? Is this always easy for you? Why or why not?
- How can we use what we learned through this experience in situations outside the game?

Check out [Teamwork: Cup Stack Take 2!](#)