

TOWER OF BABEL CHALLENGE

Two students at West Warwick High School, RI, work on the Tower of Babel challenge using only the provided materials and one hand from each partner.



Two students at the Warwick Area Career & Technical Center show off their winning entry in the Tower of Babel challenge. Notice the use of pieces of the card provided with the materials.



GOAL:

Construct the tallest (highest) free-standing tower using only the materials provided by the Teacher.

TIME NEEDED:

25-40 minutes

TEAMS NEEDED:

Divide the class into 2-person student teams

MATERIALS:

Each team is given the following materials:

- Ziplock bag with 25 colored toothpicks & one-half of a colored 3x5 card
- Ziplock bag with 25 gum drops & one-half of a colored 3x5 card

Teacher will need a tape measure

RULES:

- Structure must stand up.
- Each student may only use *one hand* to build the structure. Their other hand must be placed behind their back.
- Teacher is sole arbiter for measuring and determining the height of tallest structure.

SKILLS EXPLORED:

Planning, Creativity, Communication, Teamwork, Coordination, Engineering, Design, Re-Thinking, Testing, Re-Design, Observe Best Practices

OUTCOMES:

- Learn how to work with a partner for a common goal
- Learn how to use limited amount and type of materials in a creative way
- Learn how communication and sharing provides better results
- Learn how to quickly design & re-design a project
- Learn to adapt to changing competitive conditions (i.e., another team building a higher tower)

Notes:

- We have run this activity in each of 8 schools. We'll announce winners at **Youth Entrepreneurship Day on May 24, 2004**. It is always amazing to see the creative ways students have of trying to outdo another team.
- Record height: 27.5 inches!
- In one large class we divided class into teams of three students. The best (and funniest) results are from two-person teams. *More teams, more fun!*

Thanks to Ken Proudfoot, President of the Enterprise Institute of Rhode Island and Development Director for the Rhode Island MicroEnterprise Association in Providence RI, for providing information on their program for youth and the following activities in use in the program. Need more info? Contact Ken Proudfoot: kennethproudfoot@hotmail.com, or check out their Entrepreneurship Center web sites at www.youthentrepreneurs.com, www.rimicroenterprise.org