Resource Resilience

Tinker Toy Exercise

Spatial Requirements: Classroom with moderate space required
Activity Type: Movement/group
Grades: 5-12
Group Size: 8 or more
Time: 30 minutes

Introduction: This activity demonstrates that Resource Resilience is not just about accessing available resources, but about using them creatively and in a way that solves a problem.

Materials:

- 1 container of tinker toys per group of 8-10
- Measuring tape

Activity:
Tell students that the goal of this activity is to build the tallest self-supporting structure with the contents of the tinker toy container.

Give groups 7-10 minutes to make their initial plan. During this planning stage, tinker toy parts are not assembled. The groups can lay the parts out on the floor or table, but they cannot connect parts.

Following the 7-minute planning stage, groups will have 2 minutes to assemble their structure. You may notice that while some of the structures are quite elaborate, they are not achieving the goal of building a tall structure.

Give students 2-3 minutes to re-evaluate their structure. During this time, they are allowed to disassemble their tower if they want to, but not to re-build any part of their tower. After the discussion time is up, give students 2-3 minutes to make a second attempt at building the tallest tower.

Make a show of measuring each tower to determine which one is tallest. Give a round of applause to the winning team.

Note that one effective way of building a tall free-standing structure is to use one of the round pieces and create four spokes with the longer stick-like pieces. It then becomes a process of quickly connecting the sticks to the connectors and going as high up as possible. This structure, while not necessarily sturdy, does meet the criteria.

Processing the Experience:

- How well did the group make use of all its resources, including the ideas of each member?
- Did anyone dominate the planning stage?
- Were each person's ideas for building the structure treated respectfully?
- How well did the groups maximize the physical resources of the tinker toy parts?

This activity also applies to Street Resilience and Relational Resilience. The following are some questions that apply to these sources.

Street Processing:

- How did the group respond to its members if they failed to build a tall structure?

- Were you able to learn from your mistakes and treat each other respectfully in spite of the failure?

Relational Processing:

- To what degree did you feel responsible toward the other members in your group to accomplish the goal?
- Did your group allow one person to dominate and take charge of planning?