

## **LESSON TITLE: GROUP LEADERSHIP PROBLEM (GLP) #3**

### **LESSON OBJECTIVES:**

GLPs are designed to build leadership and teamwork skills. These skills are important for everyone regardless of whether or not they continue in CAP.

**TEACHING METHOD:** Informal Lecture and Student Exercises

**CONTACT HOURS:** 1 Hour

**READING:** None

**READING RATIONALE:** N/A

**MATERIALS REQUIRED:** A container of Tinker-Toys for each group formed

### **LESSON OUTLINE:**

**Strategy:** Students will work as a team, communicate as part of the process, and complete one of the three provided group leadership problems (each GLP takes approximately 1 hour to complete).

**Process:** Divide the class into small groups of approximately 8-10 students each. Each group will need its own container of Tinker-Toys. This is an exercise where it is especially worthwhile to appoint at least one observer per group. Each group receives identical instructions:

“Your task is to build the tallest free-standing tower you can using the materials in this container (i.e., the Tinker-Toys). You will have 20 minutes to plan your tower and 40 seconds to actually build it. During the planning phase you may examine your materials but you may not connect any pieces. If you do so, those pieces will be removed and you will not be allowed to use them to construct your tower. I will announce when the planning phase begins, and will announce when it ends. At the end of the planning phase, all of the pieces must be returned to the container; the pieces must be in the container when the building phase begins. As with the planning phase, I will announce when the building period starts and when it ends. When I say ‘Stop’ you must cease all construction. Are there any questions?” (If there are, merely re-read the relevant portion of the instructions).

Some points to watch for (in addition to the standard points on the “observer guidelines”):

1. How does each group handle the various responsibilities of leadership and followership? (You did not appoint any specific leaders)
2. Groups almost always fail to appreciate how quickly 40 seconds passes. It is sufficient time to build a tall tower so long as group members' work is coordinated. However, most groups fail to plan adequately for what proves to be the most critical task constraint (i.e., the brief building period). Constructive actions that tend to increase chances of success include: appointing a timekeeper; practicing "dumping" the Tinker-Toys out of the container; delegating responsibilities.
3. It is interesting to see how many groups will turn this into a competition between groups when the instructions actually say nothing about inter-group competition.
4. An interesting variant of this exercise is to assign students to groups based on their psychological preferences (if you know them). Groups composed of students with preferences for extroversion and perceiving, for example, typically behave quite differently than groups composed primarily of students with preferences for introversion and judging. This becomes an interesting mechanism for pointing out different groups may be due to differences in the preferences of the individuals within them. Typically the members within any group are unaware that they do behave differently than those in other groups. This variant works best, of course, if you have pre-assigned students to groups and they are not aware of the criteria used.
5. What feelings are evoked by task success or task failure? It always amazes us how much energy and emotion groups will put into this exercise, all the more so if the group members generally have a high need for achievement.

This GLP was adapted from HQAFROTC's Curriculum Department, Maxwell AFB, AL