Student Name_____ Team Name_____

Can We Talk??!!!

One of the most important activities you will do during your upcoming mission at the Challenger Learning Center is communications. There are many ways to communicate; for example, through pictures, video, print and audio. You are an important part of that communications link. Your job is to learn to be as accurate as possible when relaying information.

This activity should help you to see how difficult it is to communicate when there are no visual clues to help. You will build a structure without seeing what is being built and without any sound. This is a silent activity!!! No talking and no peeking.

Materials

8 colored mini-marshmallows per person
10 toothpicks per person
1 pencil per person
copies of COM/DAT cards (post-it notes)
copy of Mission Control instructions for MC person (optional)
copy of Spacecraft instructions for SC person (optional)

Goal

- to assemble two similar structures with only written communications and without any visual clues
- improve communications among teammates

Procedure

1. Select a partner.
2. Select a team name.
3. Collect needed materials.
4. Sit back to back with your materials in front of you.
5. Decide who will be Mission Control (the instructor) and who will be Spacecraft (the builder).
6. NO TALKING AT THIS POINT!!!!
7. Mission control begins by assembling the colored mini-marshmallows and toothpicks into a structure.
8. The Mission Control person must then write down the assembly instructions on a COM/DAT card one step at a time and give the message to Spacecraft.
9. The spacecraft person must assemble the structure according to the directions.
10. When each step is complete, the Spacecraft person must write a message on a COM/DAT card telling the mission Control person to continue.
11. When both sides feel that they have completed the structures, they may compare.
12. All messages must have an address.

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Can We Talk??!!!
Mission Control Instructions

You will make a structure using at least 6 colored mini-marshmallows and 10 toothpicks. Then you will write instructions on COM/DAT cards (post-it notes) to Spacecraft describing how to make the structure.

Example

Mission Control might write and pass to Spacecraft:

To _____:
Count out 8 colored mini-marshmallows and 10 toothpicks.

Once Spacecraft has received and done what was written, he/she would write:

To _____:
I have completed that task.

Mission Control would then write the next step. For example:

To _____:
Take one toothpick and stick a marshmallow on each end of it.

Once Spacecraft has received and done what was written, he/she would write:

To _____:
I have completed that task.

Continue passing notes to Spacecraft until you have finished giving instructions for completing the structure. Then turn around and compare your structure with the one completed by Spacecraft.

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Can We Talk??!!!
Spacecraft Instructions

Mission Control will make a structure using at least 6 colored mini-marshmallows and 10 toothpicks. Then he/she will pass along the instructions on COM/DAT cards to you and you will make the same structure.

Example:

A message passed to Spacecraft:

To _____:
Count out 8 colored mini-marshmallows and 10 toothpicks.

Once you have received the note and have done what was written, you could write:

To _____:
I have completed that task.

Mission Control would then write the next step. For example:

To _____:
Take one toothpick and stick a marshmallow oneach end of it.

Once you've received and have done what was written, you would write:

To _____:
I have completed that task.

Continue passing notes to Mission Control until you have completed the structure. Then turn around and compare your structure with the one completed by Mission Control.

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Can We Talk??!!!
Follow-Up Questions

Questions:

1. Did you construct a structure exactly like your partner's?

2. What was the most difficult part of this project?

1. How could you improve on your communications skills?

4. Describe three (3) other ways people communicate, and explain the strong and weak points of those ways.