Tinker Toys Tower Activity

Instructions for Facilitators:

1. Introduce professional staff members and take attendance. Divide those present into 2 groups; assign specific candidates for each professional staff member to observe.
2. Read aloud the Mission, Objective, and Rules to the group. Distribute tinker toys. Instruct the groups they will have 20 minutes to complete their task.
3. At the specified minute markers, read aloud the “road block” scenarios and make sure that each group is abiding by the new restrictions. Use your own discretion in relieving them of their challenges.
4. Once the time limit is reached, examine the towers and create a dialogue amongst the applicants using the processing questions listed below.
5. Throughout the exercise or in the break between groups, fill out the evaluation form for each candidate you have been assigned to observe – please be as detailed as possible!

The Mission:
You, along with several other world renowned architects have been hired by the United Nations to build their new World Headquarters in Nepal. They desire to have the tallest building in the world, and have put you and your team in charge of accomplishing this task!

Objective:
The objective is to construct the tallest tower out of all teams using the materials provided. The challenge is tough, and you’re faced with some serious competition. If you build the largest freestanding structure, your team will hail in the hall of tinker toy greatness! Good luck builders!

Rules:
1. Your structure must be free standing and may not be held up by any tape, gum, people, the force, or any other items not provided in this exercise.
2. You may not break, bend, or alter any pieces provided.
3. You must follow all instructions as provided and requested during construction.
4. You must remain with both feet on the ground at all time (no getting on tables, etc)

Scenarios:
- **5 minutes** - Workers are tired of the long hours and low pay and decide to go on strike. Until you are advised, you can only use your left hand to continue building your structure.
- **8 minutes** - The foreman notifies you that certain I-Beams are faulty and need to be reordered. Remove all green pieces from your structure and do not continue to use them for the rest of the project.
- **11 minutes** - The weather station has alerted you of high winds in the area. No construction can continue until they winds subside. You may not touch your project until advised. However, you may continue to talk.
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- **14 minutes** - During the construction phase, you realize the importance of consulting with people around the world. However you are faced with a language barrier. Until advised, you may not talk to your teammates.

- **17 minutes - Disaster** strikes! The ground below begins to shake and you're in the middle of an Earthquake!! Observers will shake your table for 3 seconds.

- **20 minutes** - All individuals must stop work and back away from the project.

**Processing Questions:**
1. What was the hardest “road block” you faced in building the tower, why?
2. What was most challenging about working in your group?
3. What did you notice about the roles that were formed within your group? Did people’s positions change throughout the process (leader, follower, etc)?
4. How important was communication in this activity?
5. How does this exercise apply to the RA position?