

A Construction Challenge: How High Can We Go?

Divide the class into teams of four or five. Each team is provided with a short stack of newspaper, and some masking or packing tape. The challenge: Which team can build the tallest sculpture within a given time limit.

This might be a good time to discuss problem-solving strategies, and different approaches. Some folks like to discuss options and plan first. Others like to jump right in and get started, modifying as needed along the way. Perhaps groups should be formed to match these styles, then the activity repeated another day with mixed groups of different styles.

Collaboration skills such as questioning, encouraging, listening, making suggestions, trying things out, and revising plans can be pointed out when they are used, providing positive reinforcement to those using appropriate strategies.

Discussions along the way might focus on what students have learned about paper structures, what they have learned from other groups, and what they have learned about themselves and each other.