Sequential Stack

Game Objective:
To solve the puzzle by moving one block at a time through the numbered sequence 1 - 20 without making the wrong move together as a team.

Learning Objective:
To work together as a team to accomplish collective goals. Communicating as a group. Understanding roles and responsibilities. Understanding Stephen Covey's 2nd Habit – Begin with the end in mind. Accepting mistakes and learning from them as they come.

Numbers: 4 to 6 people per table
Needs: Five nesting blocks or bowls. Numbered or alphabetical spots or index cards numbered 1-20, plus one additional for the start spot. One table per team.
Three index cards labeled one, two, and three. One stopwatch or smartphone to time for each group.

Time: 10 – 15 minutes

Set-Up:
Set up a table for participants to play on. As shown below, lay out the spots randomly on the table. I do like to have the 1 spot on the far left and the 20 spot in the middle.

There is no rhyme or reason, it just looks good to me. If you are using alphabetical spots, use A – T.

At the far-left place a spot on the table to set your five stacking blocks. To keep from confusing people, I turned the spot over so that it was blank on the backside.

Procedure:
The goal of the activity is to see how fast the team can move the blocks in order of smallest to largest through the sequence of numbers 1 -20. The important note to share with the participants is that there are three sequences in which to follow.
1. The sequence of the order of blocks moving from smallest to largest.
2. The sequence of the blocks landing on the numbers in sequence from 1 -20.
3. Sequence of the group to move a block one at a time and they have to stay in order of lie up as they move the blocks.

Ask the participants to set up the blocks as shown in Figure B on the blank spot on the far left of the table. Then ask the group to number themselves in order. If there are six on a team then number from 1-6. This is their batting order.

Have the group also designate a timekeeper to measure how fast they were able to complete the task. Give the group(s) ten minutes. Within that time, they can try as many rounds as they can to achieve their fastest time. The timekeeper then needs to keep records of every attempt and record it on a flip chart. (This recording is not necessary for the actual activity but it is nice to have if you wish to process improvement.)
When the timer says "Go," player 1 grabs the smallest block (A) and moves it to spot 1. Player 2 grabs the next-sized block (B) and moves it to spot 2. Player 3 grabs the next-sized block (C) and moves it to spot 3. Player 4 grabs the next-sized block (D) and moves it to spot 4 Player 5 grabs the largest block (E) and moves it to spot 5. In this scenario, I am using six players in my example. So now, player 6 grabs the smallest block (A) and moves it to spot 6. Then player 1, because now they are next in sequence, grabs the next-sized block (B) and moves it to spot 7. Repeat this pattern until you reach 20. The final rule is that the team has to restack the blocks. Again, keeping the same moving order the next person in line grabs the (D) block and places it on the 20-spot stack. Then (C), (B), and finally (A). When (A) block is back on top of the stack as it rests on the 20-spot, the timer then stops the stopwatch, records the time and the group can try for a better time.

Variations:
- One way to simply change the dynamics is to add another block and or add more numbers.
- Add different-sized wood shims of different sizes or add blocks of different shapes. One set is cut in slants so that when stacking it will be a little more difficult.
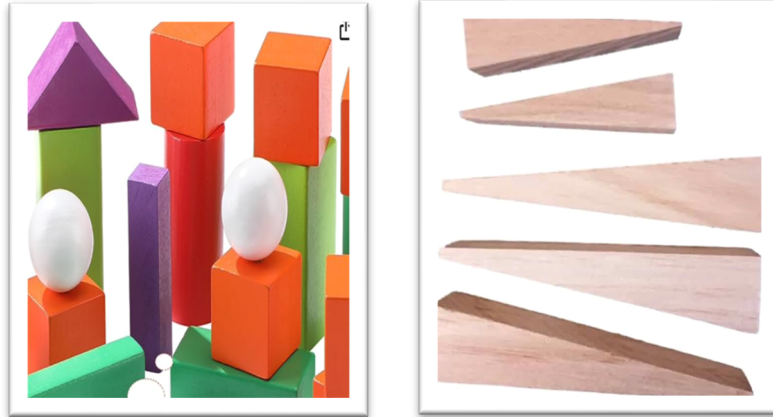
Process questions:
1. What were the challenges of this exercise?
2. What assisted the group in reaching the goal?
3. Did the team achieve a collective goal? Did the team have a collective goal? What was it and what steps were necessary to achieve them?
4. What hindered the group in achieving the goal?
5. What did the communication look like to reach your fastest time?
6. How did you react when teammates missed their mark or stack? Are those reactions a form of communication? How do we build the skills to encourage and move forward after mistakes?
7. Talk about your planning process.
8. Did you change your approach? If so, how?
9. Talk about the leadership exhibited in the group.

History:
This game was created when I needed to do something different. Wanting to showcase at an ATD conference what we do for team building in between sessions I took the supplies above to come up with a very quick minute to win it game. This is the final product of that creation.

Video Link: