

The Toothpick Factory

The *purpose* of this lesson is to help students understand the importance of communication and learn about working in a team.

Standards Alignment

North Carolina Essential Standards Guidance

RED.CR.1 Understand the meaning and importance of career self-awareness and career goals.

North Carolina Professional Career Development Coordinator Standards

Standard III: Career development coordinators understand and facilitate the implementation of a comprehensive career development program.

North Carolina Essential Standards Grades 9-12, Information and Technology Essential Standards

HS.TT.1.1 Use appropriate technology tools and other resources to access information (multi-database search engines, online primary resources, virtual interviews with content experts).

NC Community College System College and Career Readiness Adult Content Standards

R.3 The student will develop and demonstrate knowledge of a variety of comprehension strategies to derive meaning from literary, functional and informational text.

M.2 Students will develop and apply concepts of standard measurements and use measurement tools to explore, analyze, and solve mathematical and real-life problems.

S.1 The student will develop and apply skills to demonstrate comprehension and collaboration of oral and aural information.

Workforce Development Standards

20 CFR Parts 676, 677, and 678: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. Programs are based on eligibility.

Student Objectives

At the close of the lesson, learners will be able to say...

I can

- Follow directions
- Communicate verbally
- Work efficiently in a group

Materials Needed

- Toothpicks(flat-end)
- Scissors
- Rulers with $\frac{1}{4}$ inch markings
- Nail files
- Pencils

- Handout -Soft Skills Scorecard

Delivery Suggestions

The suggested *time* for the following lesson is 60 minutes depending on group size and technology access.

The following lesson is appropriate for

- middle school students.
- high school students.
- adult learners.

Instructions

1. State purpose of session and post within the room for reference. (above)
2. Share the "I can" statements and post within the room for reference. (above)

You may wish to share the steps below in printed format with job seekers, as you walk them through the following.

3. Divide the group into teams of 4, each team will consist of 1) Pre-production Technician, 2) Production Technician, 3) Finishing Technician, and 4) Quality Control Representative.
4. Review the Toothpick Factory Instructions handout.
 - You can give each team a copy or put the instructions on the board/projector.
 - Discuss “What is the Toothpick Factory?”
 - Go over “What will I be doing” and assign each participant a job (you can have participants select their jobs if you’d like).
 - Give each team 20 toothpicks, a pair of scissors, a nail file, a ruler, and pencil.
 - Go over how much time they have for their order (15 minutes)
 - Go over the order guidelines
 - Begin the game.
 - During the game, look over the Soft Skills Scorecard – use the “actions” listed on the scorecard and the sample questions (see Sample Sheet) to facilitate discussion.
5. When the time limit is up, have participants complete the Soft Skills Scorecard.
6. Using the scorecard, focus on the communication skills you observed during the activity. Were participants being respectful of each other, were they being bossy, etc?
7. Use the sample questions (see Sample Sheet) to further facilitate the discussion.
8. Encourage participants to share their observations and discuss what they would change/do differently.
9. **ADDITIONAL OPTIONS:** You can continue the activity by changing the customer order specifications (see Sample Sheet) and/or moving team members around to different teams.
 - This is a great opportunity to see how well the participants “adapt” to the change.

-Discuss their reactions, how did they feel about the change, how did they react, and what would they do different.

10. Reflect on the “I can” statements, asking learners to give a “thumbs up” or “thumbs down” if they feel the objective was met.

11. Participants will analyze the skills that are important in the workplace and determine what they need to improve to be a successful team member.

Adapted from: FLATE –flate.org