

N A S A G A

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Cool Stuff !!

These activities are provided by Alain Rostain as samples from a new book he is writing on icebreakers and engaging activities, otherwise called "Juicers".

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Enemy/Defender

Players stand in a circle. Starting with the coach, each player says their full name and briefly tells the story behind their name (for example, how they got their name, the meaning of their name, nicknames). Take approximately 30 seconds per player.

DURATION: 5-10

SUPPLIES: None

TIPS: Use with groups where most players already know each other.

USE: To get players to learn something new about each other and each others' names. To break the mind-set of thinking we know everything about our co-workers and therefore taking each other for granted.

Story Name Game

Ask the players to pair up and select A's and B's. B's close their eyes. A's lead the B's around the room without touching them, using only the sound of their voice calling out B's name. Begin by demonstrating this with a volunteer. Show how by varying the tone of your voice, your distance from your partner, and the frequency with which you say their name, that you can safely lead your partner around obstacles and in and out of danger. Remind them that their primary objective is safety. If their partner is in any kind of real danger, they must intervene physically. After a few minutes, switch roles, with B's leading A's.

DURATION: 10-20

SUPPLIES: None

TIPS: If possible and time permits, have players explore other spaces, leading each other out into the hallways and beyond. Works well outdoors as well. Use other coaches as spotters.

VARIATIONS: Hand to Face Leading: B's keep their eyes open. A's lead them by using their hand and placing it very close to B's face. B's follow the hand.

USE: To build trust. To explore leading and following. To heighten other senses.

Blind Leading

There are two main variations.

Chairs: Players sit in chairs in a circle, with one chair removed. The extra player begins by standing in the center of the circle and naming a category that they fit into. Everyone in that category finds a new chair. The player who is left standing selects the next category, and the game continues.

Room: Players stand in a large open space. Any player selects a category that they fit into and tells everyone in that category where to move to in the room. All players in that category move to the new location. Any player can select the next category, and the game continues. Best if coach does first few "calls".

DURATION: 5-20

SUPPLIES: None

EXAMPLES: Everyone wearing something black, find a new chair...or...Anyone who owns a cat, move to that part of the room.

TIPS: Use the chairs version for smaller groups and for the highest energy. In the room version, players will observe more about who fits into what category.

USE: As an ice breaker and energizer

Categories

Players secretly select a pretend enemy and a pretend defender. When the coach says 'go', players move around the room, trying to keep their defender on a straight line between their enemy and themselves. No running.

DURATION: 3

SUPPLIES: None

TIPS: Play several times so different patterns emerge. End with Enemy Defendee (see below).

VARIATIONS: Enemy/Victim: Players place themselves between their enemy and their victim

USE: As an energizer. For fun. After lunch. After breaks.

Story Name Game

SIDE COACHING

Your story doesn't have to be funny or clever.

DISCUSSION

Ask if players learned something new about each other. Repeat some players' observations. Ask if anyone was rehearsing what they were going to say, and indicate that this is natural to do. Point out, in this case, that they are the experts in their own name and they don't need to pre-plan their story. We get in the habit of thinking ahead.

CONCEPTS

Pay Attention to the Present. Don't Think Ahead

Enemy/Defender

SIDE COACHING

Walk, don't run. Don't move or grab your fellow players. To end each round, yell "Freeze!" and ask players "Who's properly defended right now?"

DISCUSSION

What was that like for you?

Blind Leading

SIDE COACHING

Take care of your partner. Intervene physically if you have to. No talking, except for calling your partner's name.

DISCUSSION

What was that like?

Which was easier, leading or following?

What was hard about following? Leading?

What adjustments did you make?

What helped you trust your partner?

How might the adjustments you made during this game be applied to your working relationships?

CONCEPTS

Give and Take Leadership - Build Trust. Make Your Partner Look Good - Tune into the Group.

Social Simulations: A versatile, hands-on learning tool.

by Troy Rhinefort and Alysia Lamb

Students at the Univ. of Southern Indiana who graduated in May, 2000

The classroom is traditionally a place where students sit in rigid rows of desks and listen to an instructor lecture on topics they have not, or will not ever experience. It has been our experience that simulations break down these walls and allow students to experience the emotions involved with a topic, so that they may relate those emotions to the real world subjects. This type of learning is something textbooks and lectures rarely evoke.

Simulations can also be a benefit for leadership training in the business world. Along the same lines as in the classroom, business conferences are usually day-long seminars where participants listen to a speaker as he/she goes through a power point presentation. Gaming allows attendees to participate in hands-on learning and to experience the emotions that they will actually experience in their business endeavors.

It is very unlikely that we would actually have the opportunity to hustle someone, to experiment with our sexuality, to create our own utopia or to be apart of the group that rules a nation. We experienced all of these activities and learned from them during social simulations in a safe classroom environment. The opportunity to see the world through someone else's eyes, to do and say unnatural things, and feel different emotions, always drove the point of the topic deeper into our minds. We learned through experience, not simply by being told what it feels like from someone else.

SEX ON THE BEACH is a popular simulation that allows one to experience group sex, promiscuity, and even try an alternative lifestyle. In the college environment, this is a very popular "game". Only once the simulation was over, student's eyes are opened to their everyday behaviors and the risks they put themselves in during sexual encounters. This classroom simulation changed our opinions about the carelessness of sex and consequences that result from not being responsible.

The simulation STARPOWER takes a deeper look into the class system. It allows participants to experience power and the desire to stay on top, or to experience powerlessness and the struggle to work their way up the social ladder. Often strong desires are felt to stay in control.

During STARPOWER, Troy was made aware of the fact that the power he had so easily gained could also easily slip through his fingers, much like in the real world. The desire to remain in power began to consume him. STARPOWER also allowed him to see first hand how easily people can fall on hard times and be demoted into poverty. His confidence soon turned to fear. The opportunity also arose while playing STARPOWER to witness segregation and fighting between different groups; thus beginning a revolution in the lower class.

Overall, he learned how the elite oppresses those in lower classes by not giving them a voice. The opportunity for advancement is rare, and the people on top hunger to stay there, so they create rules and regulations to hinder advancement. The rich often get richer and gain more power, while the poor become powerless. Playing STARPOWER allowed him to realize how poorer people can be restricted, and lose all hope of advancing. Troy also learned that power can corrupt individuals, like himself.

In the simulation, SIMSOC, participants construct their own utopia by working together to create government, laws, welfare system, and harmony. Each region was a different social class. Within each region were key dignitaries that traveled group to group to develop a consensus on the desires of the people.

What Alysia learned from this simulation was: frustration is felt by political leaders when they try to please people, but they don't have control to see it actually happen; dealing with difficult people who don't seem to know the word or meaning of compromise; and that things don't always appear as to what they seem. In that, just because the "red region" was labeled as poor, they came out with the most money at the end of the game. By far, this simulation gave her a realistic look into the "real world".

Another important factor in getting the most out of simulations is having a knowledgeable facilitator. Dr. Charles F. Petranek not only has a working knowledge of how to facilitate and debrief simulations, but has also has designed 10 social simulations on such varying topics. Some of the simulations he has designed include: DISASTER: I lost more than my house, 2000; THE CHALLENGE GAME: A Social Simulation Dealing with Handicaps, 1997; ALZHEIMERS

DISEASE: A grief awareness experience of getting the disease, 1993; DRINKING GAME: A social simulation about the social pressures to drink, 1992; and SEX ON THE BEACH: A social simulation about sexual behavior and AIDS, 1992.

Professor Petranek facilitates simulations with precision and expertise. It was immensely helpful to learn from someone who created simulations that have proven to be extremely popular in not only the gaming world, but at universities and conferences across the country. Dr. Petranek is not only a genius at gaming, but also as a professor and person. He has a style that connects with the students empowering them to do their best work in and out of the classroom.

Simulations have a great deal to offer, not only within the academic setting, but also within the work place. Games give a different approach to the traditional learning style and we are thankful that we were given the opportunity to learn from their use in the classroom.