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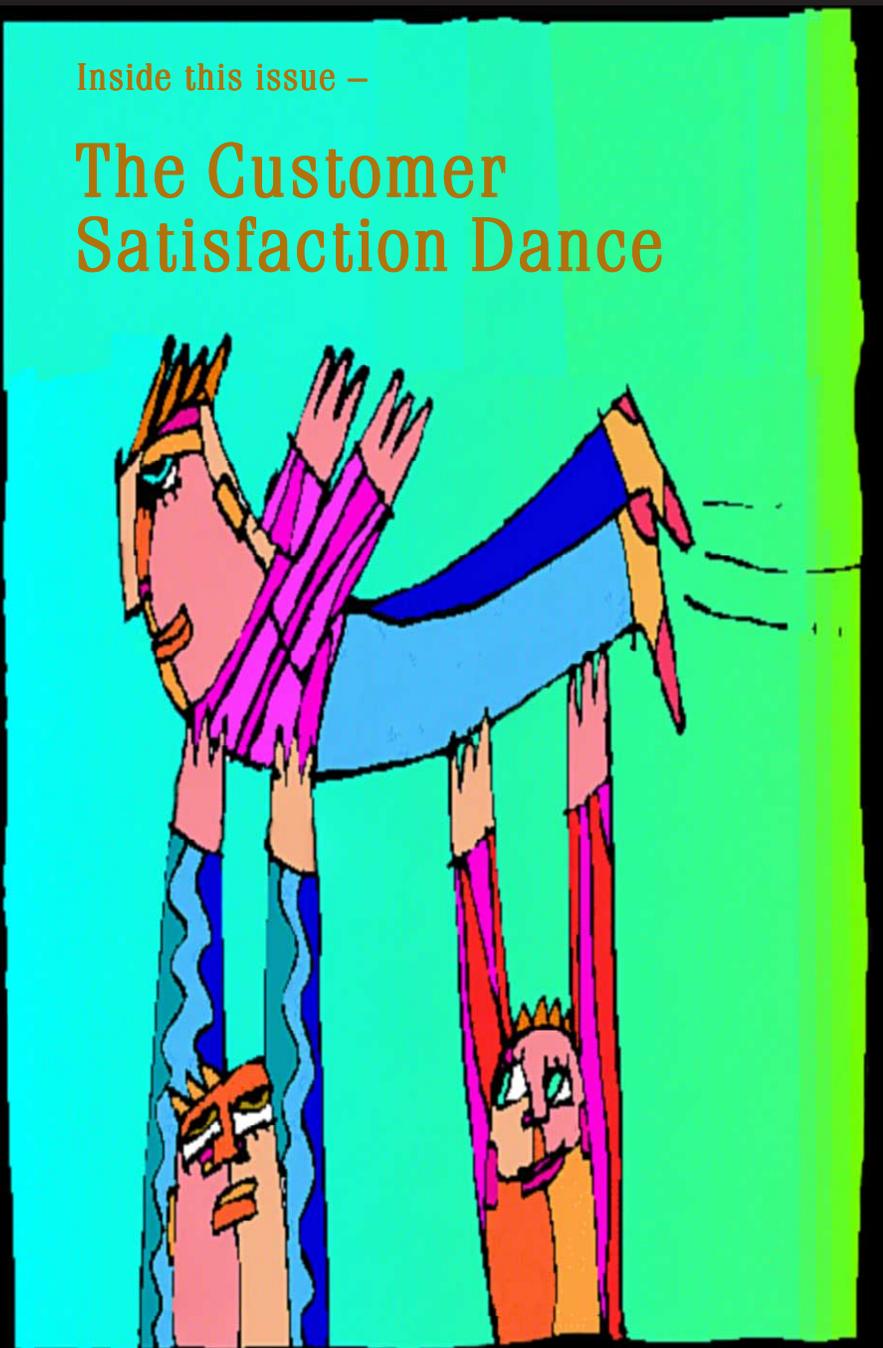
The Official Online Newsletter of the North American Simulation and Gaming Association (NASAGA)

Volume 4, Issue 1

2004

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The Customer Satisfaction Dance



Editorial Board

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

BY ELIZABETH LEVINE

As I sit in my corner here in Atlanta I am visualizing our Saturday morning event in Montreal and I cannot believe it is the middle of December already. How quickly the time flies, especially when you are gaming and having fun as all NASAGANs do!

I imagine our new board members also feel like time is passing quickly. So before they become “old-timers”, let me welcome our new members: Ellen Gehrke, Doug Nelson, Scott Simmerman and Owen Bradley. Participating on the NASAGA Board does involve the loss of precious free

time, so I am extremely appreciative of the efforts that all our board members put forth. In addition to these four folks, we have Charles DuPont who was re-elected to a second term and Leslie Bruncker who was on the Board a few years ago (a glutton for punishment that one!). Continuing in their terms are: Brian Remer, Chris Saeger, Thiagi Thiagarajan, Raja Thiagarajan, Les Lauber, Sonia Ribaux, Dave Matte and David Jones.

At our brief Board meeting in Montreal, the topic of NASAGA organizational values came up. We did not get to discuss this in depth, so

I thought I would like to initiate some dialogue. While I do not have the historical benefit of being a NASAGA elder, I do think I have a sense of what our organizational values are and therefore what values would be mirrored in the way the Board works and the way we work with each other as members. Below is my attempt at capturing specifics and I welcome your input, comments and questions.

We had a wonderful time in Montreal and I look forward to our next gathering in Washington, D.C. I hope your holidays were safe and happy! ■

Contact begins with Five C's:

Collaboration — we value working with others and leveraging the synergy of multiple perspectives

Creativity — we value fresh thinking, new perspectives, and innovation

Curiosity — we value the process of questioning, questioning everything!

Continuous learning — we value on-going discovery and knowledge acquisition for ourselves and our colleagues

Celebration — we value the ritual of recognizing and congratulating ourselves on accomplishments (large and small!)

Strengthened by Four S's:

Sharing — we value the exchange of knowledge and information for the simple sake of “passing it along” for others to use

Support — we value the process of helping our colleagues in their learning efforts and pro-actively offer assistance

Simple — we value the least required structure and hierarchy for our organization to be effective in achieving our mission

Significance of the debrief — we value the process which provides space and time to make meaning of our activities and games

Followed by Three F's:

Flexibility — we value the ability to adapt, adjust and improvise to meet the needs of the learners

Fun — we value the joy and energy of having fun as a goal in its own right

Flow — we value the ability to get in touch with and ride the emerging path

Ending with the All Important Vowels: A, O, I:

Appreciation of diversity — we value the perspectives and life experiences brought by colleagues of different backgrounds, races, ethnicities, religions, able-bodiedness and sexual preference

Openness — we value the willingness to reconsider our own perspective and see through the eyes of another

Integrity — we value a moral compass which applies both to our personal and professional behavior and which calls for us to hold ourselves accountable as individuals and as an organization

NASAGA 2004: WASHINGTON, DC

BY CHRIS SAEGER

Plans are underway for the conference in 2004, in Washington DC. Negotiations with the conference center and the hotel are nearly complete. The conference dates this year will be November 3-6, 2004. We are planning a few changes in the agenda to incorporate suggestions from the Montreal Conference. Among them, the idea of “Free Cells” times for you to network or

engage in open game rooms with others. We are also planning to hold the conference through Saturday with the Awards Banquet on Saturday night. This will allow more people to take advantage of Saturday-over air fares.

The conference venue will be in Washington, DC proper and you will be able to get out on the town conveniently. As with Montreal, lunches will be included as well as

breakfasts and breaks. These mealtimes provided a casual networking environment that many participants commented on.

The local chapters of both American Society of Training and Development and International Society for Performance Improvement are interested in participating in the conference and will be offering volunteers and other services for the conference. ■

QUEL CIRQUE!

BY SONIA RIBAUX & CHARLES DUPONT

Here's a brief report on the NASAGA 2003 Annual Conference in Montreal.

The kick-off soirée was a mix of gypsy music, fabulous martinis and secret missions in the warm and enticing atmosphere of the Jello bar. The conference participants were surprised to be greeted at the door by a fire-eater and more surprised still later to find the police raiding the bar in search of gypsy fugitives (you had to be there).

One hundred and fifty-four participants were kept busy for three and a half days with 3 pre-conference workshops, 32 concurrent sessions, 2 keynote addresses and one world

café. On Thursday evening participants found it difficult to choose an activity. The Tribal campfire reunited NASAGA elders (almost all the Ifill-Reynolds award winners were there) for an evening of reflection, memories and insight into the world of gaming and simulation. The other activity that evening, equally inviting, was an innovative workshop on dance and teamwork. It was difficult to choose.

The Friday evening banquet was a big success. The auction items sold for an unprecedented \$6000 dollars. Part of the proceeds was given to a non-profit group that provides breakfasts for school

children. Thank you to donors and buyers.

We'd like to extend our thanks to people who wrote to us after the conference. Here is what some of you had to say:

“I want to thank you. You did an awesome job of making the conference very special. So many thoughtful touches and a great, warm, learning experience.”

“My world has expanded with fabulous new possibility... the opportunity to come to this conference confirms my instinct that I am on my life path... where I am meant to be.”

“The NASAGA conference was one of the very best conferences I've ever attended!”

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the success of this conference. ■

NASAGA ONLINE: VERSION 1.0

WHAT? NASAGA ONLINE?

BY CHRIS SAEGER

That's right! For the first time ever we are going to do an all online conference on March 10-13, 2004. Our partner for this conference is ICohere, a provider of online conference services. This is not web-conferencing. It is a complete conference environment. It allows you to watch presentations and participate at your own convenience as well as live chat participation. You have to see it. For a tour of the ICohere conference service go to:

<http://www.icohere.com/replay/conferencelink/replay>

We are now finalizing presenters for the conference. Doug Nelson, a highly rated presenter in Montreal and Thiagi will be on the program with other leading practitioners in the online simulation and gaming world.

We will be sending out more on the program and registration at the end of January. ■

LOOK AT THIS LINE UP OF PRESENTERS!

Clark Aldrich
Simulearn

www.simulearn.net

Author: *Simulations and the Future of Learning*

Bernie DeKoven

www.deepfun.com

Keynote presenter NASAGA 1999

Author: *The Well Played Game*

Jennifer Hoffman

President, Insync training,

<http://www.insynctraining.com/>

Author: *Live And Online — Tips, Techniques and Ready-To-Use Activities for the Virtual Classroom*

Marie Jasinski

Director, Design Planet Pty Ltd

Adelaide, Australia

www.designplanet.com.au

Doug Nelson

President, Kinection

www.kinection.com

NASAGA 2003 Montreal Presenter!

Marc Prensky

Founder & CEO, Games2train

www.games2train.com

Author: *Digital Game-Based Learning*

Sivasailam Thiagarajan

President, Workshops By Thiagi, Inc.

www.thiagi.com

The master of gaming and simulation on and off-line.

MYSTERY THEATER

BY BRIAN REMER

Looking for a simple wrap-up activity with impact? You might encourage people to “act” on what they’ve just learned. This suggestion is guaranteed to punctuate the important points of your workshop and end the day on a high note.

Preparation

Divide your participants into teams of four to six and give each team a box containing five mystery objects. The objects should be a mix of items unusual and common with no obvious connections between them. Sample objects might be a string of beads, a tea strainer, a fly swatter, Silly Putty, and a can of Spam. Give each team the same mix of five items.

Presentation

Here’s one way you can present the activity: “All the world’s a stage and now it’s time for the grand finale. The task for your team is to create a short skit related to some-

thing important that you learned today. We call this Mystery Theater because our props manager, who is something of an eccentric, has assembled all the props you’ll need in your own box. (We just don’t know what’s in your box yet!) In her wisdom, the props manager knew that you would be able to use your mystery items in whatever skit you created. So, you must use all the props in your box and you must use them to represent something *other* than what they really are. Make sure everyone on your team participates. You have ten minutes.”

After the preparation time, give each team a few minutes to perform their skit. Be prepared for a lot of energy and humor! At the conclusion of each skit, invite the audience to identify the important learning points that are related to the day’s topic. Make a list of these on newsprint and be prepared to distribute it to participants as a follow-up.

Variations

There are many variations on this activity. Use it at the beginning of a workshop and people can make skits about their expectations. In a session of several days, they can use acting to give feedback about the program at its midpoint. Another variation would be to give each team a unique box of props so everyone is working with different resources. Or, you could specify which learning points had to be included in each skit.

Why is acting with odd props effective?

In Mystery Theater, people are presented with a challenge that really stretches their creativity. And in that stretch to connect the organization’s ethics policy with a yellow yoyo, for example, people gain new insights, make links to other things they’ve learned, and improve their retention.

So if want to end your session with a sure round of applause, you might try “staging” it with a bit of theatrics! ■

A QUICK SHAKEDOWN

BY LES LAUBER

Here is a short activity I presented at the 2003 NASAGA Conference in Montreal. We used it in Quality Management training sessions when I worked for the State of Kansas. As best as I can recall, one of our trainers there designed it. We used it to help supervisors and managers start to consider what happens when we set our sights on “doing it faster.” It can also be effective as an opener or an energizer.

Purpose

To examine what happens when an organization focuses on efficiency of process without considering the desired effectiveness of outcome.

Time

Less than ten minutes, plus debrief.

Participants

Any number up to about 50. This game works best with 15-20 people.

Supplies

Newsprint or blank overhead transparency and markers for the facilitator.

Room Arrangement

There should be a large open space for mingling.

Flow of the Game

1. Brief the Players: Tell the participants the next activity requires them to shake hands with every other person in the room.

2. Measure the Benchmark: Time the activity; make note of when you say “Begin.” When participants have

shaken each others’ hands, note how long it took.

3. Explore the Handshaking:

Without being obvious, ask a few questions about what the process was like. Participants often talk about how nice it was to renew previous acquaintances, to say “hello” to someone they haven’t seen yet today, or to learn the name of someone new. Tell the participants how long it took to shake hands with everyone else.

4. Announce the New

Standard: Explain to the participants “Our competitors in the handshaking industry are shaking hands at twice the rate we are. To stay in business, we have to reduce our time to shake hands by *two-thirds*.” Give them only one-third the time they took in the benchmarking round, and have them begin again. In other words, if the first handshake took three minutes, give them one. Although this stage often looks frantic and hurried, the energy level really gets a boost. Time this round, too.

5. Raise the Stakes: Reveal the new time, and congratulate the participants if they met the new standard. (Or gently chide them if

they did not.) Whether or not they made the new standard, make a statement along these lines: “The executive team has noted how favorably our stockholders responded to our more efficient handshaking processes. To return greater value to them, the executive team has set a new standard—15 second.” At this point, most groups stand around in a circle with their hands all together and do a single shake that includes everyone.

6. Debrief the Participants: Ask a series of questions that draw out how the participants feel. Usually, most of them discuss how great they feel in meeting the goals. Often, at least one will also point out that what was nice about the first round—connecting with people—was lost in the last round. If not, ask some questions about how participants would compare the quality of the first round against the quality of the last round. Invite the participants to explore how the phenomena—focusing so much on becoming efficient in process that we neglect effectiveness of outcome—occurs in their workplaces. ■

THE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION DANCE

BY KAT KOPPETT

Reprinted from the story archives in www.thestorynet.com

Perhaps not surprisingly, we have found it easy to collect stories from our own experience of BAD customer service. After all, customer service is hard! And as *Fast Company* magazine (June, 2001) pointed out recently, it is getting harder and harder as products become more technical and customers more educated and demanding. What we decided to share, though, is a story about GREAT customer service. Great customer service and the forces that endanger it.

Recently, Kat, needing to shed some childbearing pounds, took up an aerobic dance class. The instructor, “Lesley” has proven to be the model of good customer service. At the end of class she runs to the door to say “goodbye” to each individual student. She remembers the names of each of the students in her classes after just one meeting. After Kat brought a couple of friends to a class with her, Lesley asked about them, and sent a handwritten postcard to thank her for bringing guests, including a discount card with the note. When Kat tripped one day in a substitute’s class, Lesley somehow heard about the incident, and made a point of asking her about it the next night. In addition to all this, Lesley is cheerful, energetic and entertaining after over 20 years of teaching.

Now this would be story enough, no? But one evening, something happened that made us prick up our consultant ears and have a little customer service epiphany.

This dance-aerobic class is part of a national chain, and like any franchise, has operating standards that it must follow. One evening, Lesley informed us that she was to be “monitored” the next night. “So I want to practice doing the routines the ‘right’ way,” she said. “Just follow me for whatever’s different.” It turned out that the instructors were not supposed to modify the routines, and that Lesley had been doing so. Our class was filled with former dancers who asked for more complicated steps. Lesley provided funky arm movements and additional steps. She also added some alternatives for those with injuries. We were asked not to engage in these unorthodox movements while the monitor was present. Our class that day was a little less fun and a little less comfortable, but the students loved Lesley and worked hard to learn the routines the right way.

A few days later, Kat returned to class, wondering how the evaluation had gone. “It was great!” said Lesley, thanking the class. “I scored 100%.” She paused. “Now, let’s go back to having some fun.”

Lesley has never since done the routines the “right” way, and boy, are the students satisfied customers.

Debrief Questions:

1. How do internal standards support customer service?
2. How do they hinder it?
3. How much control can you as a manager have over your front line service providers?
4. Who do your customers know and feel loyal to?
5. Why do we demand the procedures that we demand?
6. When do we allow ourselves to modify our official procedures?
7. How can I support behavior that will lead to the most satisfied customers?

Recommended Resources:

- ◆ *“Customer Satisfaction is Worthless, Customer Loyalty is Priceless”* by Jeffery Gitomer – An easy-to-read, compelling book on customer service with some nice stories included.
- ◆ *“The Seven Sins of Memory”* by Daniel L. Schachter – At a recent ASTD conference, we had long debates about whether or not stories needed to be “true”. Read this book, and see if you think it is even possible to know. ■

PAPER TOYS THAT TEACH

BY WILLIAM C. WAKE

Paper can be manipulated into toys of many interesting shapes. Toys are fun, but they can also carry information. There are three ways I've used such toys: as a proxy for another process, as a job aid, and as a learning aid.

The act of making a paper toy can serve as a proxy for a real process. For example, Extreme Programming uses pair programming and coaching to help support a collaborative environment. PAIRIGAMI COACHING has a pair of people fold origami, while a third person observes and coaches. Skills such as observing how initiative trades back and forth, what it looks like when someone is not participating fully, and when to offer advice apply to paper-folding as they do to programming. And it's a lot less work to set up origami than a programming environment.

A job aid is an object with information or instructions that can be used while performing a task. Paper toys can be good carriers for this information. An interesting design can make people interact with the job aid more than they otherwise would, or encourage them to keep it in a handy place.

When a job aid is not appropriate, toys may still be useful as learning aids. (A job aid is not appropriate when performance must be quick, or the task is performed under high

stress, or the performer's authority is compromised by its use.) Some exercises or games may be able to integrate learning aids into their structure.

Mechanics

There are many different ways to use paper:

- ◆ Origami (paper-folding) and cutouts (such as paper dolls or snowflakes) are natural as process proxies.
- ◆ Three-dimensional shapes (such as cubes), pop-ups, or up-pops (that is, self-opening popups), can make job aids that stay visible.
- ◆ Flexagons (shapes that open to an unexpected number of sides) can make interesting job aids that encourage interaction.

When describing process information, you often map each step to a side of a shape. For example, the TEST-FIRST STOPLIGHT describes a three-step process on a triangular prism, using the metaphor of a stoplight. If the number of steps doesn't match the intended shape, you can either re-work the process description, or use a different shape.

Example

Thiagi (www.thiagi.com) graciously allowed me to turn his debriefing

model into a learning aid. It has six steps, which suggests a cube shape. Since order matters, I'll make sure the steps are numbered, and put each step's successor on an adjacent side. To encourage manipulation, I'll put the text at different angles. It all fits on a generic cube template that can be printed, cut out, and taped together.

Further Resources

- ◆ *A Handbook of Job Aids*, by Rossett and Gautier-Downes (ISBN 0883902907), is an excellent introduction to job aids and how to create them.
- ◆ Thiagi's debriefing model is described in *Play For Performance*, July, 2001, at <http://www.thiagi.com/pfp/IE4H/july2001.html>.
- ◆ The web page <http://www.xp123.com/jobaids> has templates and job aids for creating various paper toys; these have links to other useful books and articles.

About the Author

Bill Wake is a coach of agile software teams, an instructor, and an author. He's on a quest for impossible objects. Contact him at William.Wake@acm.org. ■

THIAGI'S DEBRIEFING MODEL

IN CUBE FORM

1. How do
you feel?

4. How
does this
relate?

2. What
happened?

3. What
did you
learn?

6. What
next?

5. What
if...?

For Best Results:

- ◆ print on card stock
- ◆ cut on outer lines
- ◆ fold wings to back
- ◆ fold to cube shape
- ◆ glue or tape wings
- ◆ tape edges for extra strength

DEBRIEFING MODEL © 2003

by Sivasailam Thiagarajan

<http://www.thiagi.com/pfp/IE4H/july2001.html#ToolKit>

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CUBE © 2003

by William C. Wake

<http://www.xp123.com/jobaids>

FRANKLIN AND TONAPAH'S CORNER CORRAL

BY ELLEN GEHRKE

Franklin and Tonapah are horses who train people. Franklin is a wise old ranch horse from Montana and Tonapah is his pal who lived as a wild stallion in the open desert until he was gathered in the wild in 1999 by the US Bureau of Land Management. Franklin was given to me as a gift and has been a special pal for 15 of his 23 years. I adopted Tonapah 4 years ago and have encountered many challenges in the gentling process. Franklin and Tonapah are very wise and experienced horses and they hope that experiencing the spirit of learning from their point of view will be helpful in your professional and personal life. Their stories will, hopefully, take you on the trail to gaining deeper insight into how to build trust in a relationship and how to recognize the try in learners. The TRY is the heart and soul of what is inside of people and horses. I constantly worry over how to create an environment for my horses and my students so that their heart and soul can be open and free.

Lesson One: People put their priorities in the wrong place.

Franklin: A while back I was watching Ellen trying to get one of our herd horses, Storm, to step on a black tarp on the ground. Her goal was to get him on that tarp. She was very results oriented. The problem was that her idea of results and Storm's idea of results were not even close. He was afraid of the tarp and she didn't see that—she was focused on getting him on and over that tarp. I watched as she thought by forcing him on the tarp that things would be fine...but they

weren't. I chuckled a little as she tried to pull him, cajole him, force him, strategize about all the ways she could get him on the tarp. I finally had to tell her that, in all her frenzy to get results, she wasn't paying too much real attention to how he felt about the whole thing. He had a different perspective on what was happening. He wasn't feeling very confident and Ellen wasn't taking the time to recognize the little tries that Storm would give her, such as a foot forward and then a hesitant move. She wanted everything from him without allowing him to explore his options, or maybe fail and then try another way. She was not paying attention to rewarding a real try and building on it again. It wasn't about getting my pal Storm on the tarp—it was about making him feel confident and curious about exploring, learning, trying and when he did - to try some more. I like Ellen, she feeds me, loves me, keeps my hooves in good shape and gives me a good home...She considers me her guardian horse...so I thought I would help her out with some common horse sense.

Franklin: Hay, Ellen what are you trying to do?

Ellen: I want Storm to step on and over this tarp so that he gets more confident about taking me on mountain trails.

Franklin: Have you ever thought about trying to get him more confident first and then he might step on the tarp?

Ellen: What do you mean, Franklin?

Franklin: Look at him, he is afraid. Horses don't just resist for no reason. He is afraid and does not feel confident enough inside to do the whole activity at once. Why don't you notice when he leans forward, or takes a deep sigh and drops his head, and pet him — help him to feel good and confident that he is making an effort in the correct direction. You want everything all at once and he doesn't understand it completely. Build on the pieces and I'll bet he eventually will feel so good about doing what you ask that it won't be about stepping on and over a tarp but more about trusting himself and his relationship with you that will make it easier to try other things. Put your priorities in the right place. It isn't about the tarp— it is about the relationship that leads to the slightest try, and recognition of the slightest try that leads to results in the overall plan.

Ellen: Thanks, Franklin. I am glad to have such wise friends as you and Tonapah. And, I am sure Storm will appreciate your advice.

Epilogue

About half an hour later and with a great deal of patience and awareness of Storm's anxieties and fears he did actually step on and over the tarp very quietly and without a lot of confusion. But, by then it wasn't about the tarp. Storm and I had worked with each other instead of against each other and we were able to do even more than just the tarp after that. He is crossing ditches and streams, going up steep hills we are partners together exploring along the trail.

Franklin suggested that I try to transfer this lesson with Storm to my classroom. He made me examine the way I "support" student learning. I look more for the slightest effort and try and find ways to build on those efforts in ways that are meaningful for that particular student, participant or client. I find it is really making a difference in their motivation and effort. Franklin asked me to tell folks to take the time to really put their priorities in the right place before they start "training" on folks and trying to get results that don't make sense to the learner. ■

PLEASE E-MAIL
YOUR IDEAS,
ARTICLES, AND TIPS
FOR SIMAGES TO:

thiagi@thiagi.com

ABOUT NASAGA:

THE NORTH AMERICAN SIMULATION AND GAMING ASSOCIATION (NASAGA) IS A GROWING NETWORK OF PROFESSIONALS WORKING ON THE DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION, AND EVALUATION OF GAMES AND SIMULATIONS TO IMPROVE LEARNING RESULTS IN ALL TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS. WE BELIEVE GAMES AND SIMULATIONS ARE AN EXTREMELY USEFUL TOOL FOR CREATING RICH LEARNING.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO JOIN NASAGA OR ARE CURRENTLY A MEMBER AND HAVE QUESTIONS REGARDING YOUR MEMBERSHIP, VISIT WWW.NASAGA.ORG

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If you would like to become a member, please complete the form at:

http://www.nasaga.org/become_member.asp

If you have any questions concerning memberships, please send an email to:

info@nasaga.org

PLAY FOR PERFORMANCE

As a NASAGA member you are invited to the January issue of this the newsletter.

To access this issue point your browser to

<http://www.thiagi.com/pfp/IE4H/january2004.html>

Read, play, and enjoy!

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