NASAGA

SIMAGES

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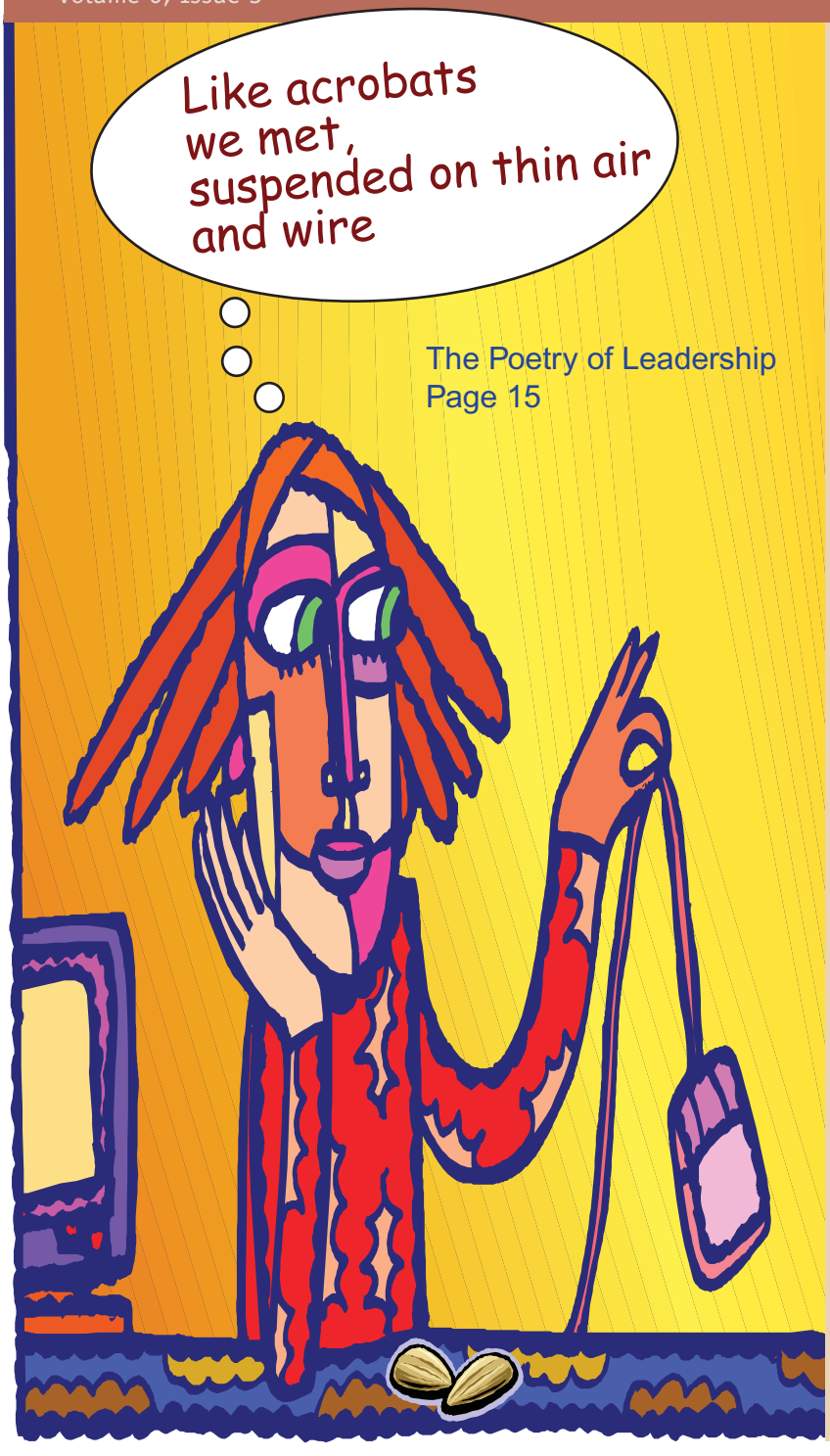


Editorial Board

Judee Blohm, Brian Remer, William Wake

Table of Contents

From the Chair:

Hello from the Skies
By Dave Matte 2

NASAGA 2006 Conference:

Program Highlights 2

The Great Vancouver Treasure Hunt
By Dr. Clue 3

Articles:

Social Engagement through Business Games: A Brazilian Experience
By Dr. Luiz Cesar Barçante, Dr. Ing. Fernando A.N. Castro Pinto, Sorelle Felix de Souza Barçante, & Glauco Melo 4

Thoughts on Engaging Groups and Interactivity
By Scott Simmerman 8

Interviews:

Talking with Matt DeMarco
By Judee Blohm 10

Meet Dave Blum
By Bill Wake 11

Reviews:

Resource Review: Cultural Detective
Reviewed by Ann Marie Lei 12

Activity Review: Vision Web
Reviewed by Matt DeMarco 13

Book Review: Developing Serious Games
By Bryan Bergeron
Reviewed by Bill Wake 14

Ready to Use Games/Techniques:

The Poetry of Leadership
By Brian Remer 15

30 Second Cinema
By Matt DeMarco 19

Emotional Meeting
By Kat Koppett 20

Game/Puzzle:

NASAGAN'S Common Bonds
By Dr. Clue 22

FROM THE CHAIR

HELLO FROM THE SKIES

BY DAVE MATTE

Hello from the skies. I am writing to you from a window seat on a flight from Tampa through Phoenix to Vancouver while on another crazy training tour. Weather-related flight delays – oooh the wandering trainer life…how do we do it? And why?

Of late, I have been reminded why NASAGA has an important role to play. There is simply too much narrated PowerPoint in the world and not enough engaging learning! Sometimes it makes me wish more presenters, and their PowerPoint slides, would experience weather-related flight delays!

Speaking of engaging learning, NASAGA's 2006 conference, Light the Fire, is coming up fast! Mark your calendar for October 11 to 14 in Vancouver. There will be 24 concurrent sessions on a wide range of topics. I am excited about the keynotes and certificate program. We've already reached capacity at our venue, but we look forward to having you join us next year in Atlanta.

Members of the Board will be spending some time discussing the vision and mission of NASAGA prior to the conference, examining ways of offering more value to our members. Recently, we added the motto – *Playful Methods, Serious Results* to our website. If you share these values of our organization, and would be interested in serving on the Board, please send me an email at dwmatte@yahoo.com. I've learned so much from my own participation on the Board over the last five years. I would encourage you to give it a try.

As it turns out, because of the weather delay, I have missed my flight to Vancouver and will be rerouted through San Francisco where I'll be stuck overnight! Which leads me to two final thoughts: Relax through the bumps and pack extra underwear and socks.

See you in Vancouver! ■

Dave Matt
dwmatte@yahoo.com

SOME CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

- Full-Day Pre-Conference Workshops by Kevin Eikenberry and Chris Saegar, Bernie DeKoven and Kat Koppett
- Wednesday evening Opening Reception
- Keynote presentations by Dave Chalk, Bernie DeKoven, Kat Koppett and Dr. David Kaufmann
- Choose from twenty-four concurrent sessions such as

  Extreme E-learning: Outside the Box, Beyond the Pale and Past the Bleeding Edge – Dick Carlson

  Hanging on by Letting Go: Avoiding the Outcome Trap – David Gouthro

  Get a Clue: Teambuilding Treasure Hunts – David Blum

  Barriers to Communication – Richard Powers

  Implementing Games and Simulations in the Virtual Classroom – Joey Lynn Monaco

  Storytelling: Developing sensitive multicultural organizational practices – Judee Blohm

  A list of all concurrent sessions is at http://www.nasaga.org/conf_2006/descriptions.wrp.

  Information about the Game Design Certificate is at http://www.nasaga.org/conf_2006/game_cert.wrp
- Closing Program includes banquet, keynote presentation, benefit auction, dance, and more!
- For more information, please email Dave Matte at dwmatte@yahoo.

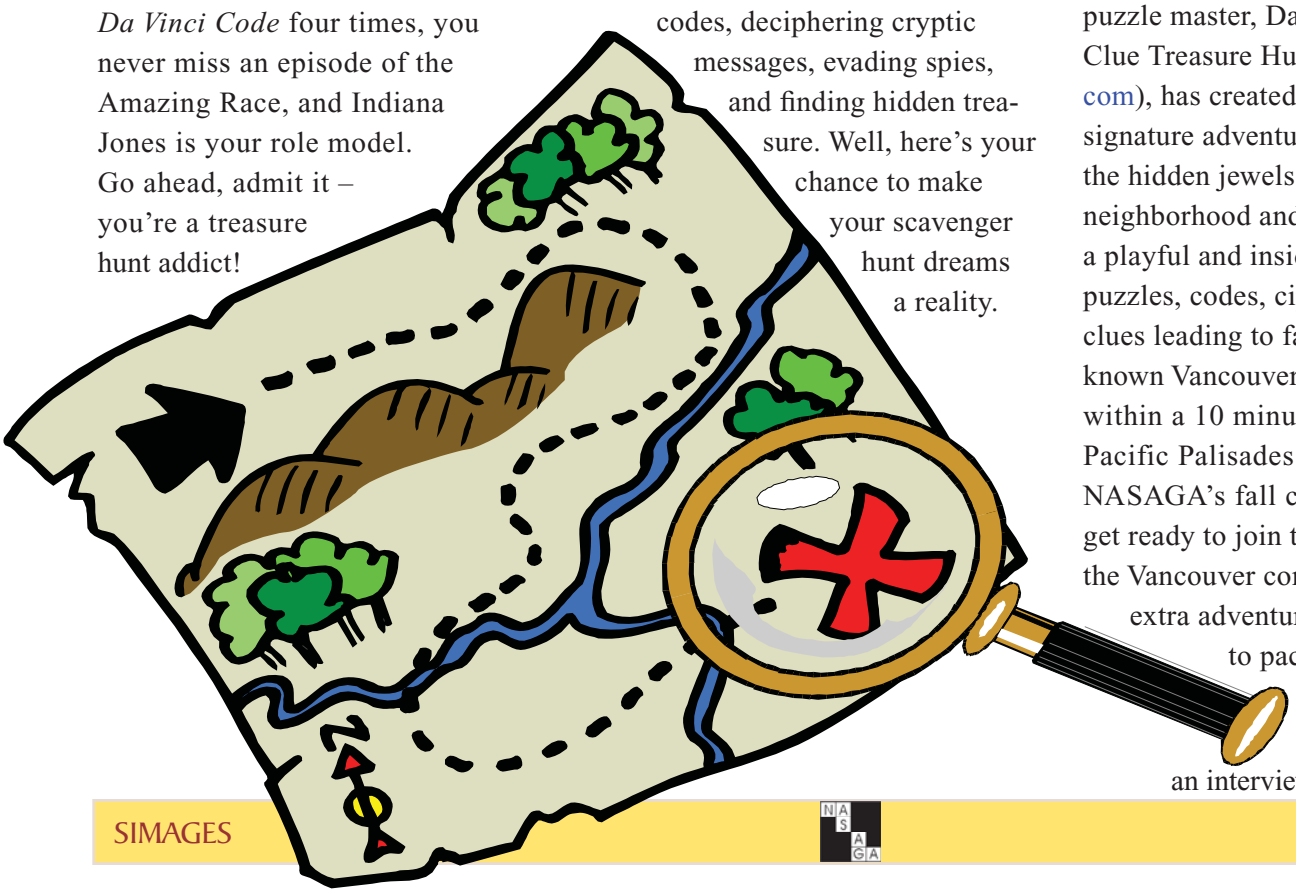
CONFERENCE

THE GREAT VANCOUVER TREASURE HUNT

BY DR. CLUE

So you read Dan Brown's *Da Vinci Code* four times, you never miss an episode of the Amazing Race, and Indiana Jones is your role model. Go ahead, admit it – you're a treasure hunt addict!

You dream of cracking secret codes, deciphering cryptic messages, evading spies, and finding hidden treasure. Well, here's your chance to make your scavenger hunt dreams a reality.



At NASAGA 2006 our resident puzzle master, Dave Blum of Dr. Clue Treasure Hunts (www.drclue.com), has created for us one of his signature adventures, bringing alive the hidden jewels of our conference neighborhood and environs. Expect a playful and insidious collection of puzzles, codes, ciphers, and trivia clues leading to fascinating, little-known Vancouver landmarks – all within a 10 minute walk of the Pacific Palisades Hotel, site of NASAGA's fall conference. So get ready to join the adventure! At the Vancouver conference, plan for extra adventure and don't forget to pack your favorite decoder ring! ■

See page 11 for an interview with Dave Blum.

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT THROUGH BUSINESS GAMES: A BRAZILIAN EXPERIENCE

BY PROF. LUIZ CESAR BARÇANTE, D.SC.,
PROF. DR.-ING. FERNANDO A. N. CASTRO PINTO,
SORELLE FELIX DE SOUZA BARÇANTE, &
GLAUCO MELO

Abstract

The vision of any modern organization takes into account social aspects. Considering this concept the simulation Business Game to Develop Entrepreneurship (JELFEM – acronym in Portuguese) was developed to be used in a partnership with the Christian Beneficent Association (ABC). JELFEM is run without cost in poor communities of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in order to provide community members with little formal education some insight into management. It should be noted that the characteristics of the Brazilian economy force a great number of people to run their own informal businesses. Simulation participants are split into small groups, each group acting either as miners, goldsmiths and jewelry store owners. They compete among themselves, simulating a production process without any specific roles. The evaluation of their performance as groups is achieved through different indices: average price paid for the material, average price received for the sale, aggregate value, market share, financial share and return on investment (ROI). A thorough feedback discussion is held after each round in the game to uncover the motivations behind the decisions taken, whether correct or incorrect ones. The game uses color plastic pins to represent stones and precious metals (white pins – white gold; yellow pins – gold; red pins – rubylite; green pins – tourmaline; blue pins – aquamarine).

Key words

Business games, entrepreneurship, social ethics, social responsibility.

Introduction

How can we explain that "science" should be seen in a broad perspective (to include aspects not always taken for granted when the word science is mentioned)? Will that develop if we learn just what is taught to us?

Why do disciples surpass their masters? They can if they are able to learn by themselves, motivated by their curiosity, goals and vision of the future.

If we say, "Do it the way we teach, and it is enough," they stop being creative.

Learning becomes more meaningful, clearer, as we try to understand three points of view:

- the essential,
- the important, and
- the accidental.

The *essential* is something that you have to do immediately. It is linked to the present and it cannot really be postponed. To live the essential is to live the present. To live the essential is what people should have as priority. The *important* is something that is about to become essential, but it is not essential yet. And what is the *accidental*? It's something we know neither when nor how it will happen. Worrying about the accidental is not important. If learning is an activity whose motivation plays a relevant role, how is someone going to be interested in learning something which he or she considers accidental?

If a teacher or a consultant (both learning facilitators) want people to learn something, they will have to convince them that their subject is essential or, at least, important.

Learning is successfully achieved when its utility is perceived: "I need to do something. So, how do I do it?" This motivation provides the greatest opportunity to learn. The most difficult thing is to fulfill everyone's interest in a school or in a company. This is the main point of this paper. The essential task of the learning facilitator is to provide a "vision of the future" for the student. Something that makes him dream of better days. The learner needs to see himself as someone who is able to win by applying the knowledge that is presented to him. The use of business games allows the participants to have optimum conditions of learning through a process in which they act as main actors of the learning, under a simulated business climate.

The planning exercise and the decisions taken during JELFEM are more important than the final result.

JELFEM leads its participants to:

1. the consolidation of learning obtained in the whole course,
2. the development of interaction and negotiation skills, and, primarily,
3. change their passive attitudes into entrepreneurial behavior.

Methodology

JELFEM is an exercise that consists of four dimensions:

- A structure sufficiently evident to be recognized as the same whenever it is used;
- Confrontation of the participants in conflictive situations;
- A clear criteria of evaluation;
- Administrative data, documents and materials are used in the game.

JELFEM is a ten week course with a two hour class a week. The subjects approached in the classes are vision and mission; criteria for performance excellence (www.quality.nist.gov/Business_Criteria.htm); costs and prices; incomes and expenses; assets and liability; and financial balance. JELFEM is performed in two sessions, being evaluated according to the criteria presented further in this paper. A comparative analysis is done in these sessions.

The teams are divided into:

- Three miners — they get a consignment of metals and precious stones by the government and sell to goldsmiths;

- Five goldsmiths — they buy metals and precious stones from the miners, produce jewelry and sell it to jewelry stores;
- Three jewelry stores — they buy jewels from goldsmiths which are exported.

The miners, goldsmiths and the jewelry stores have, differentiated by group, initial capital, salaries, income taxes, storage costs, variable costs, remuneration of the management, and they can invest in training and development (T&D), quality working life (QWL) and advertising.

JELFEM contains the following activities:

1. Reading the manual: all the participants meet in a specific room for this.
2. Operations: each team of participants execute the planning and operations in a determined time.
3. Filling out forms: at the end of each phase, all groups fill out a specific form containing quantitative information on all the operations in the game which shows the economical-financial situation of the companies in that period, and it is compared to the other companies;
4. Feedback: all meet in the room of the plenary where important facts about knowledge, abilities and behaviors experienced in the JELFEM are discussed. Results are also presented.

The participants learn:

- how to meet and fully satisfy the expectations and needs of customers.
- how to articulate the criticality of supplier performance.
- how to manage their processes.
- how to manage their human resources.
- how to present economic, financial results.

The participants apply, in a synergetic way, concepts about: business planning; work organization; decision processes; business controls; negotiation; time management; interpersonal conflict management; human, financial, resource and materials management; and knowledge of the market.

The price of raw material and products (jewels manufactured starting from the pins) vary depending on the conditions (politics, international affairs, new economic rules, new regulations, natural disasters, etc.) and structure of the fiscal period. Eventual rationing (based on shortages, such as electrical energy) can happen.

The interest rates will vary in relation to the behavior of the economy. The financial applications will be accomplished automatically considering the financial surplus.

JELFEM is a business game, composed of sequential and structured activities, which simulates a business climate and raises the desire in the participants to learn the market rules.

JELFEM is a game that is:

- Mixed: intertwines systemic and human components.
- Sectorial: simulates an economic sector.
- Computerized: calculations and reports are produced by computer.
- Interactive: the decisions of a company affect the results of the others.
- Market driven: emphasizes technical abilities and behaviors.

JELFEM has four systems:

- Supply systems: composed of the government, exporter, financial reports, feedback, hardware/software — the whole structure supplies the game with the necessary information for its operation. This system interacts with all the other ones, in a way to guarantee the success of the game.
- Miner trade system: composed of three companies, miner 1, 2 and 3.
- Goldsmiths trade system: composed of five companies, goldsmith A, B, C, D and E.
- Jewelry trade system: composed of four companies, jewelry X, Y, Z and W.

These four systems interact in a way to guarantee the success of the game.

Miners, goldsmiths and jewelers compete among themselves at a market previously defined. All of them start the game under equal human and financial conditions, and they can create any type of market activity, such as partnerships, associations, etc.

Results

Three training groups have graduated, with a total of 55 students, since November 2004. At the moment the 4th group is playing the game, with 35 students.

The evaluation is done by points in six items shown in Figure 1.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The introduction of business games in social programs, and the results obtained by JELFEM with the partnership of ABC, show that experience with “learn by doing” is a great addition to the improvement of the education of the

Item	Point Value
1. average price paid for the raw material	75
2. average price received for the sale	75
3. aggregate value = 2/1	150
4. market share	175
5. financial share	225
6. return on investment (ROI)	300
Total points	**1,000**

Figure 1. Point values assigned to items.

poorer classes and a strong complement to formal education.

The commitment of the participants to the game dynamics, the opportunity to experience situations similar to those found in real enterprises, the team work, the opportunity to create joint-ventures, etc., as part of the learning process have been the basis of JELFEM's success and publicity. After each completed class, the database of experiences and recorded testimonies of participants about the impact of the game on their lives enlarges.

We believe it is advisable to introduce this kind of methodology to programs or organizations dedicated to social responsibility.

Further development of the game is directed to the improvement of the cash flow considerations and a deeper statistical evaluation of the social impact achieved in the community. ■

The editors express their appreciation to Paula Solano (psolanom@gmail.com), translator in Rio de Janeiro, for editing assistance.

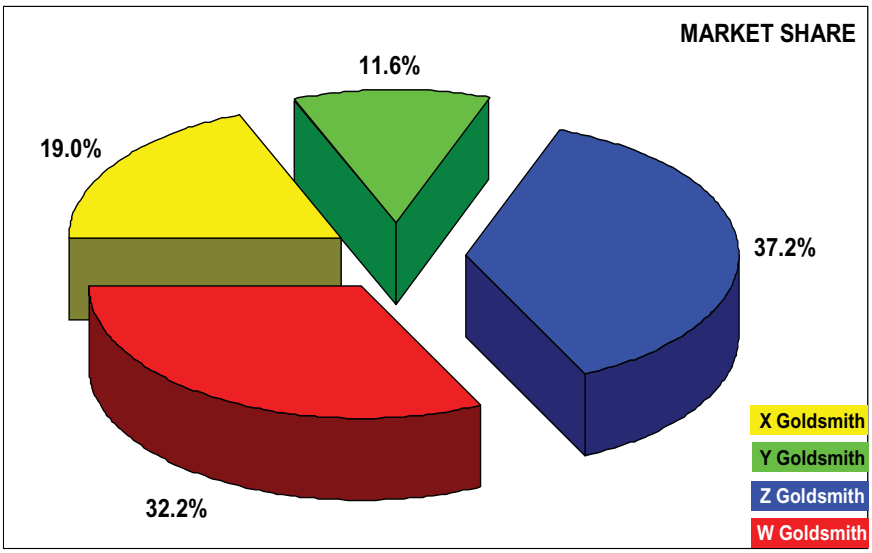


Figure 2. The Goldsmiths' Market Share

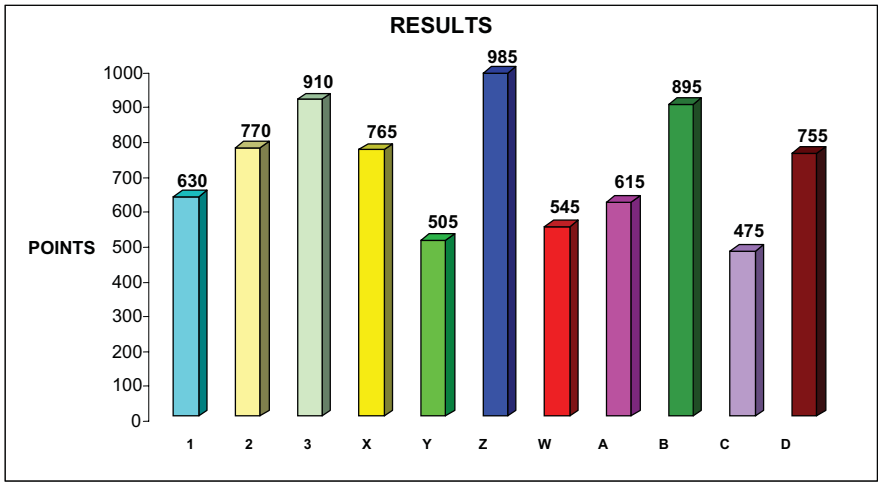


Figure 3. The Final Results

THOUGHTS ON ENGAGING GROUPS AND INTERACTIVITY

BY SCOTT SIMMERMAN

All of us want engagement and interactivity in our training and problem-solving sessions since it is proven to lead to higher levels of retention and commitment. And, for us, it is simply more interesting to facilitate higher energy meetings. But how often do you walk into a room that has been prepared by others only to find it set up with those nasty 1.5 x 6 foot tables, 2 or 3 people per table, and tables set in rows? Or even worse: no tables and just those "30-minute" chairs? Or, you are plunked into a room set auditorium style? Yuk!

A while back, I was doing a program of two sessions for about 60 people each for a county government. Flying in the afternoon before and heading to the venue with my internal colleague, we found a big room set in three rows of about 40 chairs across with 3 x 6 tables from wall to wall. So, we started moving things around to generate the right layout for our team building exercise. When we were nearly done, the "buildings guy" came in, saw what we have done, said that they had a meeting for 30 engineers that night and that the room would have to be reset as it was. The former layout was the official setup for those meetings.

For their purposes of group problem solving, our new layout would have worked better because people could actually SEE each other and talk among themselves. But they always did things the other way – rows of participants with "Mission Controller" at the front. We talked about it a bit and he agreed that we could leave the tables as they were since resetting was a lot of work. Feedback the next morning told us that they actually liked the new arrangement — there were more interactions among people! ☺

There are lots of old habits when it comes to how people set up rooms and I thought it would be beneficial to share some thinking on the impact of layout and dynamics. Viewed simply, if all people look to the front and there is a leader, the leader has control. There is no sense of group. You get confirmation of this when people raise their hands to the leader to ask for permission to speak. This dynamic can occur in other table and chair arrangements, too. Recognize that this works to limit participation from the more reticent contributors and thus limits ownership and involvement. And remember, *"Nobody Ever Washes a Rental Car!"*

The Good, the Bad and the Simply Ugly

Good is having participants sit face to face, with a place to write and a room that is nicely lighted — some combination of fluorescent and incandescent (or natural) light is generally "warmer." With the newer, brighter LCD projectors, you can work with bright lighting. Natural lighting brings balance back into many presentations, since presenters actually can see the faces of the audience and encourage

questions and discussion. It is also tough to keep people sitting for a 90-minute session — some interactive physical movement is usually beneficial. Bob Pike and others encourage a lot of activities to maintain energy. Having coffee or water in the room can also encourage some mini-movement and, for the most part, will not be disruptive.

My sessions use a large screen (or screens) at the front of the room and require a high level of participation. I present problems that require group interaction of different kinds, be it a team building game or a facilitated session focused on innovation in the workplace. In team building games where there is only an occasional need for people to face me, I set up in rounds. Where there is more periodic attention to things at the front, I prefer crescent-style chair arrangements. In brainstorming kinds of sessions, I often rely on easel pad papers with plenty of wall space, individual voting with colored dots and those kinds of involving activities, sometimes completed at the tabletops but more often completed with people browsing posted information.

There has actually been a lot of research on room layout and dynamics. Think of the issues of mood and power in a typical executive office. Prasad (2000) found that sitting behind a desk can help people either feel as though they belong or feel intimidated. The high chair of the executive and the low chair across the desk will make the employee uncomfortable. Prasad felt that clear but non-intimidating seating in an office or reception area can help people be more at ease and generate feelings of belonging. Design plays a big part in this sense of being welcomed. Curves are perceived as warm and inviting while straight lines are hard and intimidating, in many cases.

Research has shown that if there is a "lead" position at a rectangular table, one person has position authority. Think about the typical large boardroom table, for example. In training situations, if four people are seated facing each other at a square table, then all are equals. But 5 people seated at a rectangular table can put the person at the end in a command position unintentionally. Interestingly, having corners on the table may send an "edgy" message and communications are not as good as if there are no corners (round tables). The shape of the table seems to send a subliminal message about the nature of communications.

Room dynamics do have impacts on facilitation and interactions. So, let's get into some ideas about how things work.

If one is lecturing and the participants are taking notes, then the traditional classroom style is fine. If people are writing, tables are useful. And since communications are essentially one way, or controlled with a hand raised and permission to speak from the lecturer, this layout can work well. We see this often in training facilities, since you can get a lot of people in a small room with a subject matter expert at the front. However, for interactivity, this is generally a poor set up. It's difficult for more than a couple of people to speak with each other and will often involve people having to turn around to see more than two others at one time.

Having an interactive group of 4 to 6 people has been optimal, in my experience. Fewer than four tends to limit creativity, possibly because we involve fewer thinking styles and have a more limited perspective. Groups of more than 6 people tend to form a committee-type or more formal interactive process, causing some people to limit their participation and not share their thinking. Larger groups are generally unworkable, since rules of order and interpersonal dynamics tend to come into play and the more dominant individuals tend to show their dominance.

We also prefer (and often require) some level of movement from participants, either for going to a specific location to complete a task in a given amount of time or for moving between groups/ tables to acquire new or different information. Thus, we desire a larger room with space between tables to facilitate movement.

Having no extra chairs is confining — especially for the last person to enter the room, since they have no choice as to seating. Conversely, having too many empty chairs sends the unconscious message that people chose not to come to the meeting – there is also less energy in a big room full of empty chairs.

Room layouts play a major role in group dynamics. Therefore, carefully consider the desired outcomes and interaction levels and design your room layout to encourage participation. I hope that this little bit of psychology or feng-shui of room design will help you better focus on some factors you can consider as you put your training together. ■

About the Author

Dr. Simmerman is an experienced presenter, a Certified Professional Facilitator by the IAF and a Board Member of NASAGA. He can be reached at Scott@SquareWheels.com.

INTERVIEW

TALKING WITH MATT DEMARCO

BY JUDEE BLOHM

JB: Tell us about the American Farm Bureau Federation and what you do as Director of Leadership Development there.

MD: There are 3600 country farm bureaus in the U.S. made up of farmer families. The county bureaus belong to the 50 state bureaus, and together they form the national American Farm Bureau Federation. The federation cannot mandate from the top; everything comes from the bottom.

We provide training in four areas: lobbying, media, economic analysis, and organizational development. Leadership development is very broad — personal as much as organizational. Sometimes I work with individuals, sometimes with groups. Farmers are interesting because their work and life is so connected. I spend 85-90 percent of my time on development and delivery of training. The remaining time is spent managing our exchange program with Germany.

JB: What do you like about your job?

MD: I love my job at the farm bureau! I have a wonderfully supportive boss. The training area is very broad, as I described above. And I work with conservative people; they challenge me to clarify and describe my beliefs.

JB: What helps you be successful?

MD: A sticky issue is the fact that almost all the participants I train are 20 years older than me. The values of respect for age and wisdom are important to them. Not only am I younger, but also not a farmer.

What helps me be successful is the small team that I work with. We are all very supportive but all think very differently. That makes us work through training approaches thoroughly and we come up with good products.

I am also comfortable with my own style. I have learned about myself by doing so much training in different settings.

JB: What is your style?

MD: I would say I go into training sessions 75% planned; 25% of what we do is created within the group. I want my participants to own the issues being addressed as well as the educational outcomes.

A needs assessment often is done with or through a coordinator. But much of it happens within the training room — watching for visual clues: people getting stuck, people getting excited. I like to go with the flow. I'm flexible with time.

JB: Why do you believe in interactive training?

MD: Doing interactive training is so much easier!! If you are doing an information dump, you are required to be an expert on all content areas. When you use interactive methods, you are helping build skills the participants can apply.

JB: Do you have a philosophy of life?

MD: I believe one's personal and professional life have to be in balance. Lessons in training apply to life outside. ■

About the Interviewee

Matt DeMarco is a current board member of NASAGA and can be reached at mattd@fb.org. Matt has contributed a resource review, *Vision Web*, and a ready to use activity, *30 Second Cinema*, to this issue.

INTERVIEW

MEET DAVID BLUM

BY BILL WAKE

BW: Your business is Dr. Clue™ Treasure Hunts. What are treasure hunts like?

DB: A treasure hunt is a team-building experience that combines an irreverent walking tour with a stimulating puzzle game and some in-depth teambuilding training. It allows people to see the host city in a new way, and see the hidden treasures there. It provides a thought-provoking, living board game. The game is a vehicle or springboard for deciding how a team can improve their performance.

BW: What's the difference between a scavenger hunt and a treasure hunt?

DB: In a scavenger hunt, you get a list of objects to find. It's usually set up as a morale booster or pep rally, and it's usually competitive, with prizes.

A treasure hunt has puzzles and codes. It's clue-based, not list-based. It's more similar to *The DaVinci Code*, where clues unlock your ability to see patterns. It's more intellectually stimulating. And it leads you to a new location, where the treasure master wants you to go. It's more satisfying to solve clues as a team and figure out the message and location. You get to see something beautiful that the treasure master wanted you to see.

I'm not interested in more competition — I'm trying to create cooperation.

BW: It's a unique business — how did you get started?

DB: I started ten years ago. I wanted to combine my interests in team dynamics, travel, walking, and puzzles. I created the perfect job for myself.

BW: How do you use this with training?

DB: Groups work in teams of five. We've had as few as one team or as many as 40 teams. The client forms the teams so they can arrange them the way they want. Teams tend to be cross-functional and cross-geographical. It's a good activity for a group doing a meeting where they want to get to know each other.

BW: What's something interesting that happened in one of these hunts?

DB: One group in New Orleans had a serious issue. The manager wanted his team to walk quickly — and win. His assistant had had back surgery recently and couldn't keep up. It being New Orleans, they decided to rent a horse and buggy to make it easy for her.

BW: What games do you like?

DB: My favorite is Boggle — I love playing with words. Also: Balderdash, Guillotine, Fluxx, Quiddler, Set, and Apples to Apples. I'm an avid solver of crosswords and Sudoku.

I have a system for Sudoku that works every time. Label all the rows A through I, the columns J through R, and the regions 1 through 9. Write in all the numbers available so everything is charted. Every time I fill in a number, I check in each region and I can slowly take the puzzle apart. Look for the ones that give the most information, and concentrate on those. This is easier than notations in the grid. Since I started like that, I solve them every time.

BW: Where do you think simulations and games are headed?

DB: I don't have data, but experiential, interactive games and simulations will continue because you only learn when you actually do things. The brain can only retain so much information without data overload. But once you *do* it, you remember it in your head and in your body. Organizations value this. It relieves stress in a playful way. And it helps you retain what you learned.

BW: I heard we might have a treasure hunt at the conference?

DB: Oh yeah, we will. I'm going soon to scout out something in Vancouver. I'll make a 2-hour treasure hunt for us in the area of the hotel. ■

About the Interviewee

Dave Blum is the founder of Dr. Clue™ Treasure Hunts, and a NASAGA board member.

RESOURCE REVIEW

CULTURAL DETECTIVE

BY ANN MARIE LEI

Description

Cultural Dective is a flexible, interactive, experiential method for detecting relevant cultural differences and improving intercultural interactions. Using materials from the Cultural Detective series, participants are introduced to three intercultural competencies (subjective culture -knowing yourself, cultural literacy -learning about others, and cultural bridging -leveraging diverse contributions) and a deceptively simple model for analyzing interactions using these competencies. Participants work in small groups to "detect" the "common sense" of the players in cross-cultural interactions and generate practical strategies for bridging their differences.

Uses

The core materials, including the Cultural Detective worksheet and culture-specific values lenses (currently available for over 30 cultures) can be used in a wide range of situations:

- as a central component of an intercultural training program or international business course
- to develop culture-specific competence (e.g. ability to work with Chinese, French, U.S. Americans, etc.)
- to improve a group's ability to resolve conflict and improve interactions
- to add a cross-cultural component to any program (e.g. sales training, leadership development, performance management, etc.)

Potential Cultural Biases and Other Cautions

- The materials support a preference of pragmatic, verbal and social, visual and holistic learners. Kinesthetic learners may tire of small group discussion and require immersion activities to stay energized.
- Since the critical incidents are written in English, some groups with limited English-language ability may find them difficult to use. I have, however, successfully incorporated the Cultural Detective USA materials into a course for French university students. It is also possible to create your own critical incidents and offer them in the most relevant language. ■

Availability

Materials can be licensed or downloaded for a fee at the Cultural Detective web site: www.culturaldetective.com.

RESOURCE REVIEW

VISION WEB

BY MATT DEMARCO

What happens to an organization that doesn't share a common vision? Can they hope to communicate effectively with one another to solve problems? Vision Web is a simulation that demonstrates to participants how an organization with a shared vision generates the success and enthusiasm needed to solve even the most impossible of tasks.

The physical set-up is labor intensive, but adds to the excitement and frustration that is key to the simulation. Some of the participants sit in a large circle, with chairs facing outward and their backs to the other participants. On the backs of each of the chairs is written their title, such as vice-president, HR director, project manager. The circle of participants is connected by a web of ropes. Each of the participants ropes are connected to one center circle, resembling spokes on bicycle tire. In the very center of the circle is a hook. Participants use one finger to hold a key chain like grip at the end of one of the ropes.

This circle constitutes the workforce. The remaining participants fill in chairs arranged in an outer circle, to create a fishbowl arrangement. One person from the outer circle is designated to be the boss. The remaining people serve as observers and additional "workers" the boss may call on to replace participants as the simulation goes on.

In the middle of the inner circle of chairs is a table. On the table the facilitator has placed 5 stacking blocks, each with a hook in the top. The goal is to stack the five blocks on top of one another by lining up the hook in the middle of the web and the hook on top of each block.

The boss calls out the titles of the people in the inner circle and gives them instructions such as pull, stop, or give some slack. In this manner the boss attempts to manipulate the web to accomplish the goal. Since participants have their backs to the table and they are not allowed to speak, they are unable to see the vision of what the boss is trying to create. They can only react to the directions he or she gives.

The process causes frustration, aggravation, and in many cases physical discomfort. At times during the simulation, the boss can offer some additional resources, in the form of comfortable grips to some of the participants. This will often help the recipient, while further angering others in the group. There is also an opportunity to "fire" the participants and replace them with observers from the outer circle.

Regardless of the incentives, new hires, or clarity of instructions, it is impossible for groups to accomplish the goal without being included in the vision of what is to be created. The facilitator stops the simulation after about 20 minutes and asks the group to stand and turn their chairs around. He or she explains the problem to be solved and allows them to communicate with one another about the pulling and releasing needed to move the web and stack the blocks. In a matter of a few minutes groups will have assembled with ease what was impossible when they were not a part of the vision.

Included in the training package are an excellent instructor's guide, learner's guide, and DVD example of the set-up and facilitation of the activity.

This activity works with anywhere from 10 to 30 participants. I usually allot no less than 90 minutes for the activity and a full group debrief. With two hours I can include a small group discussion about the experience before the full group debrief. The instructor's guide provides excellent instructions on conducting an activity debrief, with simple, easy to use questions. I typically expand the suggested questions to hit at what I know about the particular audience and the issues they are facing.

Vision Web is distributed by Star Thrower ™ and can be purchased for $595.00 plus tax or rented for a fee of $300. For more information, visit www.starthrower.com. ■

About the Author

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BOOK REVIEW

DEVELOPING SERIOUS GAMES

BY BRYAN BERGERON

REVIEWED BY BILL WAKE

A serious game is a game that, in addition to being fun, is able to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes from the "magic circle" back into the real world. Bergeron explores serious games that have a computer component. He takes us on a survey, including technology trends, standards, business aspects, project management, design documentation, and more. He covers various platforms, including cell phones, music players, game consoles, computers, and computers with external devices.

The devices are very interesting. One is a "shirt" that a mechanical dummy wears to simulate heart beats. Another is a hardware modification to let one play video games using a balance board instead of a joystick.

The book's nature as a survey is its biggest strength and weakness. Many topics are covered, but none very deeply; some coverage is little more than a list of bullet points. I had hoped for more guidance in two areas: game design, and software design for games. The former has almost no coverage; the latter is focused more on documenting designs than creating them.

Some chapters sparkle: "Working Context" examines games in a variety of areas. "Standards" looks at many standards that affect the game world. There are several interesting appendices, including a glossary, sample documents, and a long list of resources.

If you need a broad survey of many aspects of computer-based serious game development, this book will serve you well. ■

Additional Information

Developing Serious Games is published by Charles River Media © 2005. ISBN 1-58450-444-7.

READY TO USE GAMES/TECHNIQUES

THE POETRY OF LEADERSHIP

BY BRIAN REMER

Overview

What can the hard sciences teach the soft sciences? A lot!

Recent discoveries in physics, biology, and chemistry have shed new light on the way living systems are organized. We now are seeing that flexibility can be more important than control, that a few simple rules can be more effective than detailed procedures, and that a certain amount of chaos and confusion actually stimulates creativity.

The Poetry of Leadership is designed to allow participants to experience the vitality of a self-organizing system, a concept explored by Margaret Wheatley in her book *Leadership and the New Science*. This activity is also applicable to the work of Peter Senge and his book, *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*.

Use this activity to help leaders see that with a strong vision, they can give up control and, through the dynamic interplay of chaos and creativity, they can get better results than ever expected.

Suggested Time

45 to 60 minutes

Materials Needed

- Poetry Seeds, one per page (see page 17)
- Pens

Procedure

1. Divide participants into groups of six to eight.
2. Explain that each table is going to write poetry as a group.
3. Give each person a sheet of paper with one line of a poem at the top. Have them put their initials on the back of their paper. Ask them not to show their paper to anyone else.
4. Give everyone the following instructions. (Feel free to use your own words but be sure to include something similar to the italicized words because they will help create the vision, the "strange attractor," that will hold the creative process together.)

"You are going to create several poems as a group. You may not spend much time writing creatively, but *I am sure that you do have the capacity to write poetry that is inspiring and beautiful. These poems are going to be filled with meaning, emotion, wit, humor, and profound thoughts. You will be surprised and delighted by how wonderful the poems turn out at the end.* Each of you has a sheet of paper with the beginning line for a poem. Do not show your paper to anyone else. Your job is to write the next line of the poem. Write it on your paper directly below the first line. You may be as creative as you wish but you must observe the following rules:

a.) You must use the last word of the previous line of poetry at least once in the line you write.

b.) When you finish writing your line, fold the paper back so only what you have written is visible and pass it to the right.
c.) Do not talk.

You will have 30 seconds to add your line to the poem. Begin."

5. After 30 seconds, call time and ask people to fold the paper so only their new line shows, and to pass their paper to the person on their right. When everyone has a new sheet, *repeat the three rules* and give them 30 seconds to write a new line of poetry. Continue passing sheets at 30 second intervals until the sheets return to their starting points as indicated by people's initials on the back.
6. Give the groups time to read all their poems to each other and choose a few of their best to share with everyone.
7. Ask groups to share the poems they have chosen.
8. Use discussion questions similar to those below to bring out the main points about leadership, chaos, creativity, and self-organizing systems.

Main Learning Points

- Chaos can be thought of as order without predictability. The system has infinite possibilities, wandering wherever it pleases, but its wanderings respect a "boundary."
- A "strange attractor" is the boundary that gives randomness and chaos its finite limit or shape.
- The strange attractor for people is meaning. Having a purpose is what makes our efforts relevant in chaotic situations.
- The task of leaders is to articulate a vision then allow individuals the opportunity to experiment and be creative, to make random, chaotic wanderings.
- Complexity can come from simplicity. A few simple rules plus the opportunity for randomness can create very complex results.
- Creative efforts of one person can have an effect on the whole organization if, through communication, their random efforts get picked up and amplified.
- People *can* be forced into a tight structure but it comes at a price: loss of freedom; decrease in creativity; lowered motivation; possible increased rebelliousness.
- Pinning people down with bureaucratic rules deprives them of any power over the outcome of their actions. The alternative is to provide simple, clear standards and let people have the freedom to act being guided by the strange attractor.

Discussion

- What were you thinking and feeling during the activity?
- What interesting things happened?
- As you read the line that the person before you wrote, how did that influence what you decided to write?
- What did you learn about people or following instructions from this activity?
- What similarities do you see between this exercise and self-organizing systems?
- How is this activity like leadership in your organization?
- If this activity were a metaphor for leadership, what would (passing papers, pre-determined tasks, instructions, materials, silence) represent?
- If you could add one rule to make the poems even better, what would it be?
- If you were to change a rule, which would you change and what do you think the outcome would be?
- Look carefully at your poems. Are there any examples where the rules were broken? If so what was the result? (Often one can see how the system corrected itself, a trait of self-organizing systems)

Variations

- Run the activity a second time using rule changes suggested by the participants.
- Repeat the activity but secretly tell one person in each group not to follow the rule of using a word from the previous line of the poem. In the discussion, have people look for examples of how a simple system can be self-correcting.
- Turn this activity into a closing wrap up. Secretly give each person a vocabulary word related to the training topic. Add a rule specifying that they must use that word, along with the last word from the previous line, in the line they write.
- Use this activity to initiate a discussion about how to reform bureaucratic tendencies in your organization.
- Use it as a team-building activity to help people talk about the kind of team interactions they want to promote. ■

POETRY SEEDS

Each line below is the first line of a poem. Type the lines one per page and distribute a different page to each participant. Make sure the pages at a particular table are unique.

- Random access to peripheral data dump
- Blue stars glitter on an ocean of dreams
- Forming, storming, norming, performing: the team in action
- His words left their thumbprint of desire on my heart
- Like acrobats we met, suspended on thin air and wire
- Zebra's stripe, leopard's spot, the distant heart beat of drums
- Ground between commonplace wheels, love became sand
- Time broke in waves upon the rocks of their friendship
- The fear of rejection encrusted her frozen heart like ice
- Panic blew like scattered leaves through my heart
- Fast food, fast living, fighting against a fast end
- Cinnamon and apples, the scent of Grandma's kitchen
- Glide, leap, pivot, feelings dance like a skater on a frozen pond
- Dust and time sifted through a silent corner of her soul
- Clouds as black as soot boiled on the horizon of his inner mind

Self-Organizing Systems
Resources for Further Study

Leadership and the New Science by Margaret J. Wheatley, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., San Francisco, 1994.

A Simpler Way by Margaret J. Wheatley, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., San Francisco, 1996.

The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook, by Peter Senge, Doubleday, New York, 1994.

Sympathetic Vibrations: Reflections on Physics as a Way of Life by K.C. Cole, Bantam Books, New York, 1985.

The Self-Organizing Universe by Erich Jantsch, Pergamon Press, Oxford, 1980.

Mindwalk directed by Bernt Capra, staring Liv Ullmann, Sam Waterston, and John Herd, 1991. (Based on the book *The Turning Point* by Fritjof Capra.)

Diving into Complexity: Developing Probabilistic Decentralized Thinking through Role-Playing Activities by Mitchel Resnick, MIT Media Laboratory and Uri Wilensky, Tufts University in the *Journal of Learning Sciences*, Vol.7 #2. www.tufts.edu/as/ccl/cm/papers/starpeople.

The Quantum Society by Danah Zohar and Ian Marshall, William Morrow, New York, 1994.

The Quantum Self by Danah Zohar, William Morrow, New York, 1990.

Chaos: Making a New Science by James Gleick, Penguin Books, New York, 1987.

About the Author

Brian Remer is a designer of interactive strategies for training, facilitation, and performance improvement with The Firefly Group. He is a past president and current board member of NASAGA. He can be reached at brian@thefirefly.org.

HOW ABOUT SHARING?

Do you have a resource to share? If so, write a description and submit it to one of the co-editors of *SIMAGES*:

Brian Remer
brian@thefirefly.org

Bill Wake
william.wake@acm.org

or
Judee Blohm
judeeblohm@msn.com

30 SECOND CINEMA

BY MATT DEMARCO

This activity may be used simply as a warm up but may also lead into more serious training topics.

How it works

Participants are divided into 4 to 6 small groups. Ideal group size is 4 to 12 participants. Groups are given a topic to act out, a la charades. Debriefing includes how the group worked to perform the task.

Procedure

1. Divide participants into small groups.
2. Explain that they will be doing a game that is a group version of charades.
   a. You will give each group a topic and they will have 30 seconds to discuss what they want to do and then they will act it out.
   b. There are two rules for acting it out: (1) you cannot talk, and (2) everyone in the group has to participate.
3. Start with an easy example like musical instruments. Ask how they might act out piano? Guitar?
4. Proceed with the game.
   a. For each topic, give everyone 30 seconds to come up with an idea.
   b. Then go around the room and ask each group to act out their scene.
   c. When they finish, solicit guesses from the other groups to see if anyone can figure it out.
   d. Continue around the room until each group has acted their scene out. (The important thing as a facilitator is to keep it moving. A fast pace will counter the initial shyness participants may have.)
5. When the group gets how it works, start making the scenes more difficult. Some examples are:
   a. Barnyard animals
   b. Exhibits at the zoo
   c. TV shows
   d. Movies
   e. Famous places
   f. Presidents
   g. Methods of transportation
   h. Something you do before you leave home each morning
6. You can also use this game to identify important issues that the participants face. You may ask them to act out:
   a. Challenges you face in your job
   b. Something we do well
   c. How others feel about us
   d. How we feel about the current changes
   e. Areas we could improve
7. You may want to record what the groups choose to depict and have them discuss in small groups:
   a. What actions might they take as a result of the activity?
   b. What can they do as individuals to improve the outcome?
   c. What contributing factors are beyond their control?
8. Some options for debrief questions:
   a. How did it feel to act out the first scenes? How was it to act out the final scenes? What changed to make it easier, if it became easier?
   b. How did your group decide who the leader was each round?
   c. How did you discuss ideas for what you would do?
   d. Was it easy or hard to plan the scene in 30 seconds?
   e. How did the limited time affect your perception of the issue?
   f. If we were going to make this an ideal situation where we were doing our best work, what sort of things would we want to keep in mind in terms of setting up the project (i.e. time, leadership, communication rules, brainstorming method, etc.) ■

About the Author

Matt DeMarco is Director of Leadership Development for the American Farm Bureau Federation. He is a current board member of NASAGA.

EMOTIONAL MEETING

BY KAT KOPPETT

Looking for games that are active, highly challenging, and seriously fun? Then it's time for you to explore games from the world of improvisational theater. This genre is a mix of creativity, collaboration, and spontaneity that can help your participants set the stage to advance their learning.

Improv games will be featured at the NASAGA conference in Vancouver with the keynote address of actress and trainer Kat Koppett. Here Kat shares with us one of her games, Emotional Meeting, which can be used to strengthen teams or charge up a creativity session. It is also a terrific way to sensitize people to the importance of developing one's emotional intelligence.

In a recent posting on the NASAGA list serve, member Lynette Wood of St Petersburg College in Florida, noted the importance of considering the emotional state of participants during a workshop. She talked about the phenomena of "emotional hijacking" which occurs "when the cerebral cortex is flooded with blood during fast emotional bursts of humor or stress. It blocks access to logical thinking and takes time to regain balance. Just as you can burst out laughing without planning to, you can also burst into anger without reason at times."

A positive emotional hijack, like the one you'll experience with Emotional Meeting, can jolt participants out of their routine thinking and prepare them for innovative ideas. –The Editors

Objective

To highlight the role emotion can play in interactions, and to explore how we might consciously manage emotions and their effects.

Overview

Four people role-play having a meeting. They enter the room one at a time with a different emotional attitude. Each time a new person in the room enters, everyone takes on their emotion. When the individuals leave, in reverse order, the remaining group reverts to the previous emotion.

Purposes

- Energy builder
- Team building
- Communication skill-building and awareness
- Emotional Intelligence awareness

Supplies

- Chairs and table (optional)
- Flipchart and markers (optional)

Time

5-10 minutes per group

Number of Players

3-5 per group

Game Flow

1. Ask for three to five volunteers. Tell them that they are going to role-play a meeting. One by one, they will enter, and then

leave over the course of about 5 minutes.
2. Assign each individual an emotion or attitude. (You can ask the rest of the group to suggest them. Get a variety. For example: joy, anger, fear, ambition.)
3. Assign an order for the individuals to enter the playing area, and review what all the emotions are.
4. Let the group know that whenever a new person enters, they are all to take on the emotion which that person brings in.
5. Then, explain that after the last person has been in the room for a while, s/he will leave and everyone will revert to the previous emotion, until the next person leaves, and so on till the last person is left with his/her original emotion.
6. Run the activity.

Suggested Debrief Questions

1. Why was this fun?
2. How does this experience mirror real meetings?
3. What effect does taking on others' feelings have?
4. How can we use this effect for good?
5. Do we have emotional habits?
6. Can we choose our emotions? How? Do we want to? Why?
7. Which emotions served the meeting best?

Variations

- Play "Emotional Carpool" in which the members are in a car, and pick up individuals on their way to work and then drop them off.
- Play in gibberish
- Play silently

Tips

- Gather disparate emotions for each round.
- Be prepared to coach from the side as the activity progresses. Remind people what the current emotion is, if they forget, and prompt people to enter or leave.
- Expect raucous fun. ■

Source

Adapted from the Chicago schools, Freestyle Repertory Theatre, Theatresports

About the Author

Kat Koppett is the resident improviser and storyteller for The Thiagi Group and owner of StoryNet, LLC., an organization dedicated to the use of storytelling and improv theater techniques in business.

ANSWER TO SUDOKU FROM LAST ISSUE:

Here is one solution. Other solutions may be possible.

A	N	S	A	G	A
A	G	A	N	A	S
S	A	N	A	A	G
A	A	G	S	N	A
N	S	A	G	A	A
G	A	A	A	S	N

GAME/PUZZLE

NASAGAN'S COMMON BONDS BY DR. CLUE

Each group of words that fits the definitions below has something in common. Figure out what the commonalities are, then plug them into the equation at the bottom to get your answer.

		COMMONALITY?
♦ Bernadette of stage and screen ♦ Star-shaped symbol used in printing ♦ English Cathedral town, known for its Tales	_____ _____ _____	_____ U
♦ Rapidly rotating on an axis ♦ Long-time anchor, chief anchor of ABC-TV's World News Tonight ♦ Richie, Joanie, Howard and Marion's "happy" TV family	_____ _____ _____	_____ V
♦ Exciting 1995 Harrison Ford thriller ♦ Small carnivorous mammal that resembles a cat in appearance ♦ Small oval bitter fruit with a pit, green when unripe and black when ripe.	_____ _____ _____	_____ W
♦ Treaty signed by Communist countries in 1955, dissolved in 1991 ♦ Condition of being unable to consume dairy products ♦ What Willie gave to Charlie	_____ _____ _____	_____ X
♦ Place to leave your butts ♦ A cover or over-garment of strong material (as canvas) used to bind the body and arms ♦ Benedict Arnold, for example	_____ _____ _____	_____ Y
♦ Northern European country, known to some as Suomi ♦ Eli Whitney's claim to fame ♦ Legendary creature with the head, beak, and wings of an eagle, and the body of a lion	_____ _____ _____	_____ Z

Z+U+X+W+Y+V= _____

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