Join us for fun and games in Atlanta!

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## Editorial Board
Judee Blohm, Brian Remer, William Wake

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# THE NASAGA STRATEGIC PLANNING GAME

## BY BRIAN REMER, BOARD MEMBER

**Objective:**  To determine the future direction of a geographically diverse, fun-oriented, learning-focused, professional organization.

**Number of Players:**  15 Board Members and You!

**Background:**  The essence, focus, and future direction of NASAGA were the topics of a three-day mid-year board meeting held in Atlanta at the end of March, 2007.  Led by Chair, Doug Nelson, the board took advantage of nearly one hundred percent attendance of its members to examine the organization's past, current realities, and chart a course for the years ahead using familiar strategic planning data and techniques.

**Contents:**  On-line survey results of NASAGA's membership in 2005 and 2007, a Board visioning activity during the conference last year in Vancouver, and visions of NASAGA's future generated by participants at the Montreal conference in 2003 provided the data for examining the organization's strengths and weaknesses.  In addition, Board members collected data about similar organizations and the services they provide to determine the opportunities and threats NASAGA faces.

**Playing the Game:**  Based on the SWOT analysis, the Board agreed on five key result areas which will form the basis of NASAGA's future initiatives.

♦ **NASAGA facilitates networking among professionals and organizations:** on-line and face-to-face opportunities for networking between game designers, facilitators, and users will be promoted and expanded.

♦ **NASAGA provides training and education for professional development:** various opportunities for educating our membership about how to create and use games and simulations will be developed.

♦ **NASAGA advocates the use of games and simulations to trainers, educators, industry:** games and simulations will be promoted to the corporate, academic, public education, and training consultation communities as viable, efficient educational strategies.

♦ **NASAGA provides games, simulations and other tools that are immediately useful:** NASAGA will become the authoritative supplier of interactive teaching and training resources.

♦ **NASAGA encourages, promotes, introduces and experiments with emerging interactive learning activities:** NASAGA is a laboratory and sandbox for innovative learning strategies such as on-line learning, improv games, and magic, among others.

**Winning the Game:** Clearly, NASAGA currently provides some services in all these key result areas.  However, at its next meeting, the Board will make concrete decisions about additional ways to use emerging technologies or techniques to enhance its services.

To be one of the winners in *The NASAGA Strategic Planning Game,* you have to play along!  So if you have ideas or suggestions for the Board, send them to Doug Nelson at doug@kinection.com.  Then plan to attend our conference in Atlanta to hear the latest update!  ■

# NASAGA 2007 MAGIC: A CONFERENCE WORTHY OF EPIC SONG

## BY DEBORAH THOMAS, PRESIDENT

*To be sung to the tune of "Puff the Magic Dragon."*

Nuff the magic dragon
was a trainee
who frolicked in listlessness
in a land called notforme.

Trainer Lackie Caper
loved that rascal Nuff
and brought training things
and boring books
and lots of dreary stuff.

Together they took a class
on simulation games
Lackie kept a notebook
and then used his new found games.

Together they were trainers
in a class for corporate grail
Lackie kept evaluations perched
on Nuff's gigantic tail
Managers and staffees
would bow whene'er they came
Human Resources lowered their flag
when Nuff roared out his name.

Oh, (Chorus)

A dragon trains forever
but not so little boys
Painted wings and giant rings
make way for other toys.
One grey night it happened,
Lackie Caper came no more
And Nuff that mighty dragon,
he ceased his fearless roar.

His head was cocked in sorrow,
green scales fell like rain
Nuff no longer went to train
at corporate cherry lane.
Without his life-long friend,
Nuff could not be brave
So Nuff that mighty dragon
gladly went into e-learning.

Oh, (Chorus)

Okay, maybe I have been up late one too many nights. But I've been influenced by the buzz in the air about NASAGA 2007, October 10–13 in Atlanta, Georgia. The magical part of a NASAGA conference is that it's a safe place to experiment with the unthinkable, to explore what hasn't been tried, to imagine the unimaginable. It's playful. It's magical!

The conference theme this year is Magic. And you can be sure that secrets to game and simulation mysteries will be revealed! One of the spellbinding events includes a session by Ken Bellemare, President of Communication Magic, who comes with many years of experience to bring you "The Art of Misdirection: Magic, the Senses and Learning."

A sampling of other exciting sessions includes

♦ Chris Saeger, American Red Cross – *The Magic of Games, Simulation and Learning*
♦ Brian Remer, The Firefly Group – *Hammer It Home: A Metaphorical Toolbox for Trainers*
♦ David Gouthro, The Consulting Edge – *Beyond 1000 Words: Exploring the Magic of Pictures!*
♦ Jimbo Clark, Owner/innoGreat – *The Essential Elements of... An Elegant Frame*
♦ Rick Boersma, Floworks Simulations and Training Design – *Innovation in a Box*
♦ Tracy Tagliati, Corporate Trainer – *Presto! Activities You Can Do In An Instant!*
♦ Ken Spero, CMO Humentum – *Using Simulations to Capture and Deploy Best Practices*

For an added bonus, consider coming early for the pre-conference workshops or the Game Design Certificate program. The extra day is a great way to meet new people and to explore topics in depth. Once you register, be sure to book your room in the beautiful Ravinia Hotel in Atlanta. Atlanta—the land of grits and honey!

Learn from the pros, become inspired, walk away with a toolkit full of great ideas to apply immediately, meet colleagues new and old—there are many reasons to attend NASAGA 2007. For a list of the top ten go to www.nasaga.org!

Playful methods, serious results. That sums up NASAGA. Add a bit of magic and you've got NASAGA 2007! Hope to see you in Atlanta! ∎

### About the Author

Deborah Thomas is a NASAGA board member and chairperson of the Atlanta conference. For questions or clarifications about the conference, contact Deborah at sillymonkey@mindspring.com

# THE GREAT GAME OF POWER AND THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED

### BY STEPHANIE POLLACK

Scott Simmerman's article in the 2006 Volume 6 Issue 3 of *SIMAGES* about placement of furniture in the training room touched a close chord with me. For a decade I've been using a fabulous activity in training and education that focuses on placing furniture. It's called The Great Game of Power, and it was created by Augusto Boal, internationally renowned Brazilian inventor of Theatre of the Oppressed (TO). The game is so simple it's brilliant. (What's not as simple is the language that Boal has created. Please note that many words in *italics*, ***bold italics***, and/or "quotations" are part of Boal's TO language. For example, the facilitator is a *joker* and participants are *spectactors*; Boal goes into lengthy definitions of these terms, and further exploration is suggested for those intrigued.)

## What is *Theatre of the Oppressed*?

TO is an "arsenal" of theatre exercises for non-theatre-people that support the mutual exploration of a topic in an experiential, interactive, teambuilding, non-threatening way. Boal created TO in the early 1970s based on Paolo Friere's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* which explores libratory education. I was first introduced to TO techniques in 1997, and as an intercultural experiential educator and trainer with a theatre background, I've been admittedly smitten ever since. While TO was originally conceived specifically to explore issues of oppression by having the oppressed people come up with their own solutions, I've had great success using the techniques in both training and education settings covering a

variety of subjects. Boal has, too. In addition to the original processes and activities of Forum Theatre (with words), Image Theatre (without words), and Invisible Theatre (imagine *Punked* or *Borat* with a purely social education mission), he has also created Legislative Theatre for use in politics (he was a Vereador, Member of Parliament's Legislative Chamber, for Rio de Janeiro in the 1990s) and The Rainbow of Desire for use in therapy. Boal has developed a worldwide following (ptoweb.org, theatreoftheoppressed.org). And rightly so; the techniques are incredible.

Back to furniture. Boal's The Great Game of Power is based on the premise that the set up of furniture in a room has everything to do with power. As we know, just walking into a room and seeing the arrangement

gives us clues about many things, such as hierarchy, office/class environment and culture. Boal takes this idea of the arrangement of furniture to a whole new level.

## Activity Description

The Great Game of Power (from Boal's book *Games for Actors and Non-Actors)*

## Materials

A table, six chairs and a bottle.

## Procedure

Participants are asked to come up one at a time and arrange the objects to make one chair become the most powerful object in relation to the other objects. Any of the objects can be moved or placed on top of each other, or on their sides, or whatever, but none of the objects can be removed altogether from the space.

(Boal adds a second paragraph, phase two of the activity, in which people enter the space, but as a *joker* I've rarely taken this step.)

That's it. So simple, it blows my mind.

## In Practice

Even more incredible are the discussions that occur after each person completes an arrangement. Obviously if the learning objectives of the training concern something specific, like teamwork or leadership, that's where I focus the discussion. What is revealed in the arrangements and ensuing discussion can be more substantive in a shorter time than I could ever have hoped for.

The most recent Great Game of Power session I *jokered* was jointly sponsored by SIETAR (Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research) Baltimore/DC chapter and the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) which meant the participants are already intercultural trainers and professors or are attending school to become so. Since it was a train-the-trainer session without any specific content goal, the participants/*spectactors* guided the conversations and I did a front-stage/back-stage facilitation and debrief. A few arrangements and conversations included:

- All the chairs stacked on top of each other, the bottle under the chairs, and the table behind the chairs. This reminded people of immigrants leaving their lives behind.

- Chairs strewn around the room upside down and sideways. This brought up issues of the War in Iraq and the recent shootings at Virginia Tech.

- A chair on top of the table (with the bottle beneath the chair) facing the other 5 chairs grouped in two (2 facing each other and 3 in a circle). This produced talks about styles of leadership and intercultural communication theories.

- When it looked like a typical classroom we discussed how schooling and education systems shape student's understanding of hierarchy.

Additional arrangements and subsequent remarks flowed about the U.S. government, family dynamics, academic terms for and descriptions of types of power, and what's appropriate in organizations in various cultures. All of this happened in under an hour.

## The *Joker* Plays

Over the years as I've become experienced enough to play with this activity, I've posited my own little private *joker*'s hypotheses and witnessed the results, making tiny changes to see how they can alter the activity. Examples include:

- I gave the group a bottle full of water instead of an empty bottle. (I simply forgot to open and empty it before entering a session.) Suddenly the water bottle represented a precious resource and became the focus of the entire activity, which would be good for discussions about environmental issues. I've since tested this hypothesis by starting the activity with the bottle full, emptying it halfway through, and seeing how the conversation changed. The hypothesis proved correct—the focus on water as a resource disappeared. Even more interesting, *spectactors* briefly mourned the loss of the water in the bottle when I poured it out.

- I ask all the *spectactors* to change seats. The mere change in location in the room in which they are sitting can alter their perspective and, therefore, their interpretation of the arrangement.

## Facilitation Tips

Here are a few tips if you decide to use this activity.

- The chairs should be the easily stackable kind without wheels. The table should not be too huge or heavy to be moved by one person, including turning it on the side or upside down. Be prepared for possible falling furniture—using the company's prized, handmade teak table isn't the best idea.

- The most productive room set-up is a curve or a U with the objects

(table, chairs, and bottle) toward the open end.

♦ Since the activity can bring up large, looming power related issues within organizations, even if the senior level decision makers are present, be prepared by honing both your observational skills and your ability to either point at the elephant in the room or gracefully dance around it.

♦ Practice on your friends or colleagues first. While it's a simple activity, guiding the debriefing is anything but simple. I've been doing this for ten years and am still learning how the size/shape of the furniture changes the *spectactors'* contributions, learning to match intercultural communication or leadership or name-your-field theories with the myriad of furniture arrangements that appear, and so on.

♦ Consider framing this part of the training by preceding it with Boal's activity One Person We Fear, One Person Is Our Protector. (For a description, feel free to contact me or check out Boal's book *Games for Actors and Non-Actors.*). The game is physically active, fun, engaging, pushes comfort zones in a safe way,

and begins to explore the topic of one person's power over another. As with any activity, I alter it depending on the client, the focus of the training, and the *spectactors*. Adjustments can include using the name "one person is your enemy*"* rather than "one person you fear", and keeping it either impersonal and anonymous or bringing in the deeply personal.

## Title Language

As we all know, the choice of words for a session title is crucial. I've *jokered* TO dozens of times over the past decade with group sizes 10 to 160, and the exact same program has been called:

♦ Exploring Issues of Power in International Education (at a NAFSA conference)

♦ Theatre Games (with adolescent girls)

♦ Leadership and Power (experiential educators, museum staff, Native American Art college students)

♦ Teambuilding (international staff of a university apartment complex)

♦ Intercultural Communication Training (BA, MA, and PhD students)

♦ Building Community in Your Classroom (teachers)

♦ The Great Game of Power (which creates the most mystery)

Choose wisely.

I never tire of The Great Game of Power or Theatre of the Oppressed activities. These fascinating techniques, without expensive kits or props or handbooks, are different every time. TO games, and there are hundreds, can be played with people of any age, with any background, and be adapted for and useful in pretty much any training and education context.

And it can all start with furniture. ■

## About the Author

Stephanie Pollack is a consultant who specializes in educational program development, training, and teambuilding using experiential education, intercultural communication, and various forms of the arts. For 15 years she has worked around the globe with universities, museums, not-for-profits, and corporations. If you're interested in learning more about TO or want to share how you've used the techniques in your work, please contact Stephanie Pollack at stephanie@creativefacilitations.net.

# DIGITAL SIMULATION AND GAMES

## BY RICHARD VAN ECK

Writing this article is a key event for me. I began my study of simulations, games, and learning in 1994 when I applied to a dozen or so doctoral programs in instructional design around the country. My goal at the time was to find a place where I could study the theory and practice of simulation games as learning tools, and I followed up each application with a phone call to the program coordinator at each school, asking the same question, What did they think about my developing and testing a computer-based simulation game as part of my dissertation?" Almost invariably, I got the same response, "That's not really a serious topic for a dissertation; dissertations must be scholarly."

I did not have the theoretical background I have now, or I would have followed up with the perhaps more important question: "Why do you think games are not a serious, scholarly topic?" Rather, what I had

was a conviction born of personal experience with games and a lack-luster public education, a conviction that games could be, in fact, quite a serious learning tool, and that education and corporate training were missing out on a very effective means of learning by lumping games together with other forms of entertainment. The University of South Alabama was the one place that thought games were an appropriate area of research, and I began my journey toward this moment at the University of SA in 1995.

I say this article is a key event for me because, as a graduate student, I wondered if the world would ever be ready to take games seriously and whether I would be part of that process. If it were to happen, I thought, I would have to find others who were interested in the same things, as only collectively would we ever be able to move forward. I first came across

NASAGA and the annual conference soon after entering graduate school and quickly determined that if anyone would be receptive to simulations and games for learning, it would be this group. I vowed to attend and eventually present at the annual conference and to become involved in the organization. Unfortunately, NASAGA was always scheduled within a week or so of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) annual conference, which is the primary association for the field of instructional design and technology. It was not until 2006 that I was able to attend and only then by flying directly from the AECT conference to Vancouver the same week. I had submitted a proposal and would be presenting, so two of my goals were met at the same time, even if much later than anticipated.

Imagine my surprise, then, when someone suggested to me that I throw

my hat in the ring for a vacancy on the board that same year. I agreed (of course!), wrote my bio for NASAGA at the AECT conference, and was elected (thanks to all the NASAGA members who supported me on the basis of that bio!). So here I sit, now having met those goals I set 12 years ago, writing to you about digital game-based learning.

So what do I say now? How do I encapsulate all that I have been thinking about games and learning since 1995 so that you will understand why I and many others are so passionate about games and learning? The answer, of course, is that there is nothing I can say to guarantee that. And luckily, I am preaching to the choir--most of the readers of this publication have been well aware of the power of games and simulations in training for many years. This awareness is due in no small part to the contributions of Thiagi in regard to games. What I can do, in this space, is share with you some of the conversations that are going on in the serious games' space now. So think of this article as the start of a conversation in NASAGA about digital games: one I hope you will want to be part of over the next year.

The timing for this article is perhaps particularly appropriate now, as the June issue of Training & Development (TD) just came in the mail yesterday. What is on the cover? It's a full spread on the growth of simulations in training, and a top feature listed is "Thiagi on Games," in which Thiagi shares his thoughts on games, their role in training, and how he got started with them.

But while games in training have long been a focus of NASAGA, many of us are less familiar with digital games than we are with non-digital games. I am most passionate about the power of interactive, digital game-based learning, not because it is better than other forms of games but because of its potential for immersion,

its privileging of interaction, and its scalability. However, digital games do not do anything that other forms of games can't do, nor do they necessarily do it better. As Thiagi says, "A game is a game, whether it's online or on a tabletop. The key element is whether it makes people think or not" (Thiagi, 2007, page 75). In many cases, this means that a role-play or a card game will be just as effective as a digital game (or more effective!). In fact, it means that many times, NO game should be used at all! As trainers, we know that you use the tool that works for your goals, and that no one methodology works for all people or all subjects all the time. Conversely, however, that means we need to know enough about each type of approach to be able to use it when and where it is the best for achieving our goals.

## There Is Support for Using Games

Several reviews of the literature on gaming over the last forty years, including some studies that use rigorous statistical procedures to analyze findings from multiple studies (meta-analyses), have consistently found that games promote learning and/or reduce instructional time across multiple disciplines and ages (e.g., Randel, Morris, Wetzel, & Whitehill, 1992; Szczurek, 1982; VanSickle, 1986). More recent literature reviews back this up (e.g., Fletcher & Tobias, 2006; Hays, 2005; O'Neil, Wainess, & Baker, 2005), although many point out that empirical studies of adults and games are hard to come by.

But it is also important to recognize that empirical studies are not the *only* evidence we can rely on. Some argue, myself among them, that play is the most ubiquitous learning paradigm of all mammals, certainly, if not all animals. As Chris Crawford points out (*The Art of Computer Game Design*, http://www.vancouver.wsu.edu/fac/

peabody/game-book/Coverpage. html), lions learn important survival skills as cubs through play, as do most other animals, and we're all familiar with the adage that we learn more in the first five years of life (before formal schooling) than at any other time. "There is no culture in the world that doesn't play games, other than some middle managers in Chicago who think it's beneath their dignity" (Thiagi, 2007, page 75).

In point of fact, the very methods that games use to teach what they do teach are based on well-established theories for which extensive empirical and theoretical support exists (e.g., situated learning and cognition, anchored instruction, intrinsic motivation, play theory, competition, elaboration, scaffolding, zone of proximal development, assimilation, accommodation, cognitive disequilibrium, question-asking….). On one level, it is a pretty straightforward proposition: when you get people engaged and actually doing something instead of sitting there listening (or reading, or watching….), you get better learning. Thiagi discovered this when he had his high-school students go out to find a carburetor to take apart rather than listen to him talk about the combustion engine: "I realized the power of hands-on experience" (page 75). So there are good reasons that we should use games (digital and non-digital) for learning.

## Games and the Corporate World

Despite what many will tell you, games and training (or games and education, for that matter), are not mutually exclusive domains. Digital game sales out-gross movie ticket sales every year, and the industry sells nearly one game for every person in the country every year (ESA, 2007). In fact, 75% of heads of households play games (ESA, 2007).

The fact of the matter is that a lot of people play a lot of digital games, and this is bound to have an impact on the way they approach learning if not on the physical structure of the brain itself. There is a 3-point increase in generalized IQ worldwide every ten years (e.g., Colom, Lluis-Font, & Andrés-Pueyo, 2005). Researchers have determined that these increases are not due to nutritional factors or the result of increased access to and time spent in educational settings (Johnson, 2005). Buddhist monks who spent 10,000 hours or more chanting had their brain waves measured by researchers at the University of Wisconsin, who observed that these monks emitted gamma waves at 30 times the highest observed levels in a human being. This led them to conclude that the *way* we use our brains impacts *how* our brains operate. Now consider that online teens spend 81% of their time online playing computer games (Pew, 2007), and ask yourself if you think the upcoming workforce (projected to be at 80 million) will think and act differently about learning and the workplace.

This is actually very good news, because it turns out that game players are extremely successful in the workplace, regardless of age. John Beck and Mitchell Wade have reported on the results of the largest survey of gaming (2,500 participants) in corporate America. In their book, *Got Game: How the Gamer Generation is Reshaping Business Forever*, (2004), they identify key traits held by gamers of all ages, including that half of all frequent gamers (young and old) care about the fate of their organization and believe that pay should be commensurate with effort, not automatically doled out. More than three-quarters believe that interacting with others in the workplace is both important and desirable (non-gamers expressed the lowest need for social

interaction!). These traits and the many others outlined in their book are formulated and supported by interactive digital game-play, according to the authors, as is perhaps the most important characteristic:

"The tools we are comfortable with—linear models, printed spreadsheets, single point estimates, and rules of thumb—simply can't guide us through the complex, volatile and sometimes unknowable factors that now drive many decisions, or should. [This generation is] already used to thinking in these ways—really living in 'dataspace'...Cutting edge analytic tools that look a lot more like video games than office suites have already helped...Using this technology is a purely digital, interactive experience. There IS no hard copy to fall back on..." (page 90)

So the corporate workspace is perhaps not only ready for games for training but in desperate need of it to meet the ever-changing nature of business and its employees.

## Instructional Design and Games

All of this is of little help to us if we do not have the guidance we need to actually implement these digital games in our workplace. The good news is that the tools that many of us in the field of training already have can help show the way. As instructional designers, much of our experience is applicable to using games in training. The problem is that we have been taking too broad a view of the topic for many years, and this has masked the complexity of the issue. As Thiagi points out, "The problem with people who claim that computer games are going to take over the whole world is that they use 'games' very loosely to mean anything and everything" (page 75). We must be specific about how we will use games and what for, just as we must recognize that digital games will not

always meet our objectives. Even when they do, we may be able to meet those objectives much more quickly and cheaply through non-digital games. We must also resist the temptation to argue that games are always necessary in the first place—flash cards are still one of the best ways to learn your multiplication table, even if we *can* make them digital and interactive!

I have written about instructional design and games in several places, so I will not go into great detail here, but here are some of the highlights. We know that there are different levels of learning, whether we subscribe to Bloom or Gagné. Given those taxonomies, we recognize that each different level is served by different instructional strategies, approaches, and assessment. Add to this the additional wrinkle that different technologies and media have their own strengths and weaknesses, and you have the beginnings of the rationale for what instructional design is and why it is needed. Likewise, we also realize that not all games are alike—a role-play is different than a card game is different than a board game is different from an interactive digital game. Yet we continue, as Thiagi says, to act as if all games are the same. As instructional designers, we have the ability to analyze different games for their strengths and weaknesses and to make decisions about how they align (or not) with our learning outcomes.

The truth is that *all* games teach, or you would never be able to play them. *What* they teach is the process by which players progress through the game toward the end goal. *We* want them to teach our content, so we have to look for where and when the process and the content align and design our training accordingly. This is true whether we are integrating a commercial game into our training (and extending it with activities, debriefing, role-play, etc. to make sure it fully ad-

dresses our outcomes), or whether we are designing a training game from the ground up.

Games use the same skills and strategies that we use in all good training, as well. Objectives are made clear through feedback and ongoing guidance; our progress is monitored by the game and communicated to us when and where we need it; we are required to solve problems and take responsibility for as much of our learning as we are capable of; everything we need to know or learn is in the game AND demonstrated in relevant settings; and feedback is immediate and consistent. In fact, games even make use of Gagné's nine events of instruction, long a mainstay of instructional design (see Van Eck, 2006 and 2007 for more on instructional design and games). So many of the tools we have and use already are relevant to the design of game-based training.

## There Is a Community Out There

Finally, while NASAGA is an obvious leader in the use of simulations and games for education and training, we are hardly alone in this. There is a lot of interest across a wide spectrum of professionals. Given the latest issue of T&D, it is obvious that the ASTD is interested in exploring simulations and games for training. I will be hosting a workshop for a sub-chapter of the ASTD in St. Paul, Minnesota, at the end of June that will show computer trainers how to go about integrating games into their training, and I will be hosting a similar workshop for K-12 teachers the week prior to that. The serious games movement (seriousgames.org) is moving forward in both research and practice, and there are a great many researchers and trainers who are involved there. I highly recommend the Serious Games Summit as a conference to attend if you are at all interested in the use

of digital simulations and games as learning tools. In fact, we are beginning the process of cross-marketing NASAGA with them and vice versa. We posted an announcement on the Serious Games Listserv and some of the presenters you'll see in Atlanta this year are newcomers to NASAGA who come from the serious games academic community.

This brings me to my final suggestion. No one entity, be that NASAGA, Serious Games, or ASTD, is going to figure everything out on its own. We must reach out to other communities if we are going to make this work. This is, after all, why I am part of NASAGA now and why I am writing this article. Although I have corporate training experience, I come from a decidedly academic background. This was nowhere more evident to me than during my presentation at NASAGA last year, just prior to which I learned that presentations at NASAGA are more hands-on and less PowerPoint than the academic conferences I and others in the serious games community are used to. Nonetheless, the audience was very kind and receptive, and although they would have preferred more interaction, they also recognized something of value in my presentation, in spite of the different method of delivery. This is in fact the key to understanding how games can teach as well, despite looking like 'mere' entertainment. So here's to many more such cross-cultural meetings of the mind as we explore this brave new world. And if you see any "death by PowerPoint" presentations this year at the conference, be kind and remember that the medium is not necessarily the message! ■

## About the Author

**Richard Van Eck** is Associate Professor and Graduate Director of Instructional Design and Technology at the University of North Dakota. He can be reached at Richard.vaneck@und.nodak.edu.

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# FAILING: FAST, OFTEN, CHEAP AND FORWARD – THE TOSSABLE MIC A CASE FOR RAPID PROTOTYPING

BY RICK BOERSMA

You've probably been in my sandals.

It's a New Orleans afternoon, the conference room is packed with 200 or so rowdy participants. They have just finished participating in *The Big Picture*, a simulation that involved the creation, production and raising of a 8 x 10 billboard. The crowd is psyched—everyone is laughing and clapping—although fifty minutes earlier they were sitting with their arms crossed with "Oh no, not another teambuilding exercise" scowls on their faces.

I'm standing on a riser about to facilitate a 15-minute debrief. I need to keep them engaged, to keep the energy high, and to deliver on the client's learning objectives. I know that the group can carry the debrief—they have things they can and want to share

with one another. It's happening already, people are pointing at what they've created, processing what happened, and making connections in small groups. We want to springboard that into a large-group dialogue, but it's going to be tough. Getting them to talk isn't the issue. The problem is way simpler than that: it's literally about getting them to hear one another.

We anticipated this and have two runners with wireless handheld mics in the audience whose job it is to get those mics to the next speaker quickly.

It doesn't work. The room is too tight, the movement of the mics too slow. People don't want to wait, and their voices are lost. I have to repeat what they're saying, and the energy we had leaches away.

As I'm watching this happen I experience an epiphany: *"If we could*

*unfetter and toss those microphones… heeeey! Wait a second…What we need is a tossable microphone.*"

Sitting at my computer the next day I am surprised when my googling fails to uncover a ready-made solution. I know others have experienced the same frustration and was sure someone must have devised a solution. So I threw it out to my network of collaborators, including NASAGA.

The ensuing discussion was fun but again didn't provide a turnkey solution. Normally that would have been the end of it—another good idea whose time obviously hadn't come if it required me to implement it. Except that we were working on an innovation program at the time, and this could be a chance to apply the theory and techniques we were teaching. So I decided to build it myself.

The NASAGA thread I began on January 17, 2007  (http://www.nasaga.org/webx/.1ad53508) gives a blow by blow account of that discussion. Based on it, Bill Wake of *SIMAGES* asked if I'd write an article. I said "Sure!" and only later remembered T.S. Eliott's admonishment, "Between the idea and the reality falls the shadow," which applies to tossable microphones, simulation design, and *SIMAGES* articles.

The challenge in writing the article was about alignment—what's building a tossable microphone have to do with simulations and gaming—aside being a fun and useful AV aid?  The answer I think lies in the virtues of rapid-prototyping. The process we followed in getting the tossable microphone to work was essentially the same process we follow when we create a new simulation—we rapid prototyped our way towards a solution.

What is rapid prototyping? Essentially this: Build a quick and cheap 1.0 version based on your original thoughts; try it; evaluate; and then build version 1.1 and repeat the cycle. Adult learning theory is grounded in the same methodology: experience—what?—so what?—now what?

My experience with experiential learning and simulation design over two decades has time and again shown that the fastest way to develop quality simulations is to "fail fast, fail cheap, fail often, and fail forward".  In other words prototype like crazy.  This may seem counter-intuitive because the prototypes will not, and should not, be "quality" focused—at least early in the process.  They should be fast and cheap to build, and probably won't work—which is OK (although it can be hard on your ego).  Their purpose is to teach and to generate discussion. The discussion you have when you're holding a prototype in your hand, or are watching a group of guinea-pig participants fumble awkwardly

through a half-baked simulation is very different than the abstractions of a conjectural "what if…" discussion.

If your prototypes are cheap, then budget shouldn't be an issue, at least until you have proof of concept.  When I say cheap I mean REALLY cheap—in terms of time, production values, materials.  Markers on index cards at this point—don't PowerPoint, Word or Photoshop your hours away.

"Rapid" means multiple short-cycle time iterations. If I have a design idea, and schedule the first test tomorrow instead of next week, it means that I will spend hours rather then days on version 1.0.  Based on the feedback from that session *("It was terrible! In fact we didn't even finish.  But we made some great observations and got insightful feedback from the partici-pants and we're going to try this next time…"),* we make some tweaks and run version 1.1 the following after-noon, and two days later version 1.2. By the time a week passes, you will be light years ahead of where you would have been if you'd sweated the details for a week.
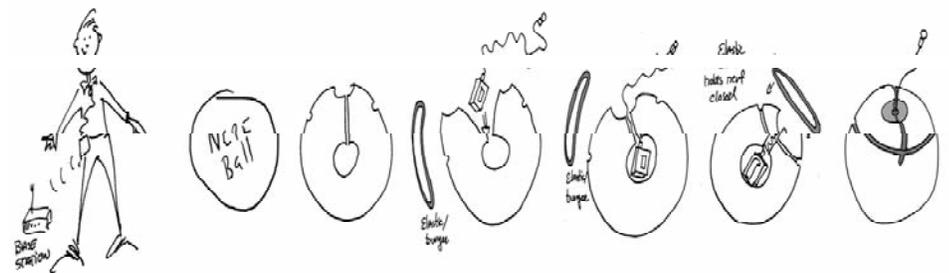


In the case of the tossable mic, the first prototyping step was a trip to a toy store. I thought that Aerobie foot-ball would be a good option, but one look and it was obvious that it was too small.  I couldn't find any larger foam balls, so was forced to go to the web. My preference would be to start cutting immediately, but I had to wait for them to arrive, so I drew a sketch, a 2-D prototype, which I shared with my team and the  NASAGA community

and which generated instant and I'd argue "better" responses then a written description could have.

It prompted a series of questions which furthered the design, "How do ensure a good fit for the unit?  How do we avoid the microphone falling out? Will one bungie cord be sufficient to hold it shut?  What kind of noise will be created when it's flying through the air?  When it's caught?   What will be the reaction of sound-technicians to a flying microphone?"

Once our supply of 6 balls arrived (a quantity that anticipated the "fail often" portion of the prototyping mantra) we were ready to begin.  Our toolkit was rounded out with a block of wood in the same dimensions as a Schure Lapel mic, a utility knife and some rubber bands.  The first version was a scalped and divoted mess, but we tossed it around the workshop and it seemed to work, and so we took another ball out of its wrapper and made a cleaner version. At this point our friend Blair said, "Let me take one home, I have some glue-on Velcro". The Velcro did a good job of holding

the ball closed, but the hold between the hooks and loops was stronger then the bond between glue and porous foam ball, and when we tried to open it, the Velcro remained closed, and the ball tore.  A good idea, and a quick prototype showed it to be a good failure as well. The cost? Less than $2.00 (we'd reuse the $6.95 ball) plus <60 minutes of Blair's time.  Not only did we learn that the Velcro wouldn't work, but Blair had made the slit

larger than in our initial rubber-band prototype, and we adopted that more open style for our next version. That made it easier to access, and easier to burrow out the center, but also necessitated more rubber bands.

The photos show "Mike the tossable Mic", version 1.3, which cost $30.00 (including the two prototypes) and less then 3 hours of production, ready for action at its first real test—a session for about 175 participants. In fact, as I stated in my posts, over the course of the two days we ran 5 sessions, with numbers ranging from 150-200 participants. Therefore we got to refine Mike, not that he needed too much—he seemed to have civilized genes. At the same time we were improving Mike the Mic, we were also running a variation of a new program for the first time with a client. Again, the fact that we got to run it 5 times in two days, and treated each like a prototype, moving the program from good to excellent. After each session we'd stop to debrief and make adjustments which we immediately applied in the next session—repeating the process.

I would say we did half a year's program development over those two days because of the fast turn-around time, our commitment to making changes, and the real-world time pressure which meant that we had to make the changes on the fly—there was no time for debate or getting bogged down in production. We made decisions and immediately implemented them—trusting our judgement that they would work, and our experience and skill as designer/facilitators to deal with unforeseen chaotic outcomes.

The moral of the story? One More Time: Fail fast, fail often, fail cheap, fail forward. ■

## About the Author

Rick Boersma has been working in the field of education and training since 1985 when he realized that the only somewhat marketable skills he had were teaching climbing and whitewater paddling. Originally working with young offenders in wilderness treatment programs, over time he also worked with probation officers, social workers, police SWAT teams, college and university programs, and hundreds of companies, large and small around the world. He founded Floworks Simulations and Training Design in 2001.

You can visit the Floworks website at www.floworkstraining.com or email Rick at rick@floworkstraining.com.





OCTOBER 10—13, 2007
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# MEL SILBERMAN: PIONEER IN ACTIVE LEARNING

## BY BRIAN REMER

Mel Silberman is an internationally known psychologist and pioneer in active learning and team development. As Professor of Adult and Organizational Development at Temple University, Mel has won two awards for his distinguished teaching. He is also President of Active Training, Princeton, N.J., a provider of products, seminars, and publications in interpersonal intelligence and experiential learning. He has more than 35 years experience creating and honing techniques that inspire learners to be people smart, learn faster, and collaborate effectively. Mel is a longtime NASAGA member and author of more than ten books with titles such as *101 Ways to Make Training Active* and *PeopleSmart: Developing Your Interpersonal Intelligence*.

When I first met Mel, I was a participant in one of his workshops. What impressed me most was the way he was able to wring so much meaning out of a few very short activities. That experience with Mel helped me realize that a skillfully led discussion could add multiple layers of meaning to even the simplest learning activity. I have been interested in his work ever since and was excited about this opportunity for a conversation.

*BR:* What happened in your life, personally or professionally that convinced you of the importance of experiential learning?

MS: Long ago, I participated in an exercise where each person in a team was given three paper clips and told that you had to give up one of the paper clips whenever you choose to talk. (When you no longer had paper clips, you could no longer talk.) Well aware how important it was for me to conserve my paper clips, I still couldn't resist talking and quickly was "out of the game." I never forgot how the exercise revealed my desperate need to "weigh in on everything" and the realization that my ability to influence a group required listening and timing.

*BR:* How do you define experiential learning?

*MS:* As I define it, experiential learning refers to the involvement of learners in concrete activities that enable them to "experience" what they are learning about and the opportunity to reflect on those experiences. Experiential learning can be based on both real work/life experiences (like working on a current project) and structured experiences that simulate or approximate real work/life (such as using a flight simulator or engaging in a sexual harassment exercise). Its range is enormous. It applies to content that is technical/hard (operating factory equipment) or non-technical/soft (selling or communication skills). Moreover, experiential activity can be used for learning that is cognitive (understanding information/concepts), behavioral (developing skills), and affective (examining beliefs).

I like Malcolm Gladwell's use of the term "stickiness" to identify why some ideas, practices, and products capture the public's imagination. (See *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference,* Malcolm Galdwell, Little Brown and Co. 2000.) Experiential learning is "sticky." When it is done well, it adheres to you. Participants will usually forget a great presentation but they often remember a great experience. What this also means is that many creative, interactive strategies are not truly "experiential." Active learning activities, such as a great case study or a jigsaw learning activity, as useful as they are, should not be relied on exclusively by a trainer. Any training needs to be infused, from time to time, with "sticky," concrete activities that are not just head-turners but heart-turners.

*BR:* What are some of the reasons you think people may be reluctant to use experiential activities and games?

MS: For some, it's the usual concern of appearing like you're a "fun and games guy," as opposed to a

"serious" trainer. They are also afraid of losing control of the group…who might experience the activities in a variety of ways, some not at all in line with the facilitator's objectives.

*BR:* You've been using experiential learning for a long time. How has the field evolved?

*MS:* As I observe the field in the first decade of the 21st century, I see not just a steady use of experiential learning activities, but a virtual explosion. More sessions of major training conferences are devoted to experiential learning than ever before. There are also more providers of experiential learning than ever before.

Three major reasons for this tidal wave of experiential learning impress me. One is that new technology provides so many useful tools for experiential training. The experiences can be virtual as well as in physical time and place; some of them are so "high fidelity," they feel just like the real thing. Games, designed for information acquisition, can be digitized and readily available on anyone's desktop for individual or group play. Augmented reality role-playing exercises are now being designed so that skill practice can be both safe and challenging.

A second reason is that the youngest generations of employees prefer experiential learning hands down over anything didactic. For example, the average age of sales associates in most retail environments is in their early 20's. These young people grew up on games and technology. Training them on everything from safety procedures, product knowledge, to loss prevention can be done with hands-on methods they embrace.

A final reason is that the best minds in the field are increasingly its most creative people. (Especially, NASAGAN's!) They have figured out how to bring high impact experiential learning into training in ways that are practical, doable, and affordable. In some cases, the front-end cost may still be high, but it pays off in the long-run. In other cases, the immediate solutions are far less costly than traditional materials. Moreover, excellent guides now exist on how to create your own "home-grown" experiential activities so that thoughtful trainers can customize experiential strategies to their own unique training context.

*BR:* What is the most critical factor an experiential designer should keep in mind?

MS: Keep in mind that ultimately the "game" doesn't count. It's the conversation after the "game" is over that really matters. I have a ratio I use….no more than one-third of the time should be spent "playing the game." Two-thirds of the time should be devoted to the debrief. I guess that's why I prefer shorter rather than longer activities.

*BR:* What makes your most recent book, *The Handbook of Experiential Learning,* different from other books on the subject?

My goal is that *The Handbook of Experiential Learning* will become the premier compendium of models, advice, and case examples on how to design and facilitate experiential learning to improve training and performance in the workplace. I sought to bring together the experience, creativity, and wisdom of many of the world's best thinkers and practitioners of experiential learning—many NASAGAN's are part of this group.

*The Handbook* has contributed articles by leading experts in three sections:

**I: The Foundations of Experiential Learning.** This section examines the case for experiential learning in the effort to bring about deep levels of learning and change. It also explores the theoretical roots of experiential learning and discusses the ways in which all experiential learning can be "debriefed" so that the experiences teach participants and not merely engage them.

**II. Experiential Learning Methodologies.** This section presents ten experiential learning methodologies. Each one represents a popular and important strategy to maximize the impact of experiential learning. Each methodology is defined and illustrated with examples that apply to an array of training topics. Expert advice is also given on how to design and facilitate each experiential learning tool.

**III: Training Applications of Experiential Learning.** This section demonstrates how a variety of experiential methodologies are utilized to form the core training approach in nine different training topics, including both technical and non-technical subject matter. For each topic, there is an examination of its critical success factors and the key experiential strategies that the author (and others in the field) have employed to conduct successful training in his or her area of expertise.

*BR:* What's your next project?

MS: I've been involved in a ten-year battle with cancer. To stick it out that long has required me to conserve my energy and reinforce my wonderful support system. In the last four years, I've authored or edited about ten books. It's time to smell the roses!

*Editors' note: A review of Mel's new book can be found on page 19 of this issue.* ■

## About the Interviewer

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 and an editor of *SIMAGES*. He can be reached at brian@thefirefly.org.

# G.A.S. STATION

BY JIMBO CLARK

*Editors' note: With NASAGA's stated mission as "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," the board has decided to share members' networking and outreach ideas. The G.A.S. Station is the first article in that effort.*

When my friend Rob called me from Bangkok to tell me he was going to a conference in Vancouver, and inviting me to join him, the timing was all wrong. I had just returned to my home in Taiwan from my parent's house in Seattle, and another 14-hour each way, expensive flight didn't exactly thrill me.

But he was persistent. "Come on, you are going to love this. It is a gaming conference!"

When I realized that it would covertly put me in Seattle to surprise my father for his 70th birthday, I figured it was a no-lose situation.

What I didn't expect was to have such a wonderful, transformational experience.

I signed up for the Game Design Certificate program, and was impressed with how the program was facilitated. I have attended Accelerated Learning conferences where trainings were given in lecture formats including PowerPoint parade. This course was delivered in true experiential, and accelerated learning format, and I for one was energized, enthused and, yes, entertained by it.

The game (or *"elegant frame"* as I prefer to think of it) that I created as a result of the certificate program has already been delivered eight times and has more than paid for my trip to Vancouver. And I will be sharing it as a session in the 2007 Atlanta conference.

What struck me most about my NASAGA experience was the sense of open sharing within the community. I have been to conferences that feel more like a confrontational standoff of idea sharing than a chance to really collaborate and grow. One evening I had the pleasure of sharing an adult beverage with Chuck Petranek who told me some stories of the roots of NASAGA—how it evolved from a number of professors who would gather once a year to explore the use of games and simulations in psychology and sociology classes, and to beta test new ideas.

Taiwan has a very vibrant and sharing community focusing on facilitation of which I have been a contributing member for a number of years. I have a bit of a reputation as "The guy who likes to play games," so I decided to make it official this year as I created my own company.

The first thing I did was to put *games, activities,* and *simulations* as a distinct part of my service model. I had never really thought of this as a discipline, but meeting professors who have been using and studying the impact of simulations on learning legitimized my passion and helped me put this up front as one of the distinguishing characteristics of my offer to the world.

I also wanted to share what I had learned, and am learning, about effective use of games with the facilitation, training and education community in Asia. So I decided to create a bimonthly forum where people could get together to play and learn games.

I needed a hoot to promote this, and came up with the G.A.S. Station (which was much better than my other idea of S.A.G.). In Chinese, "Jia Yo!"—which literally means "add gas"—is a common form of encouragement to a sports team or anyone exercising, so it seemed appropriate.

## Come to the G.A.S. Station and Jia Yo!

The goal of the G.A.S. Station is pretty simple. People should leave the session energized and full of new ideas that they can use in their practice. The format is experiential in design and execution, with an emphasis on playfulness and open idea sharing. At least one of the activities that is run each meeting will have a full facilitator guide and soft copies of handouts so that people walk away with something they can use right away.

For the first year, I decided to fully subsidize the meetings to "prime the pump" and see how much energy The G.A.S. Station can generate. My intention is that it will be a self-generative community of practice that expands the awareness and best practices of using games, activities and simulations throughout Asia

I'm happy to report that at the grand opening of the G.A.S. Station, we had 18 participants. The topic was "Different Kinds of G.A.S.: Regular, Unleaded, and Premium." We delivered one activity, one game, and one simulation and had plenty of discussion around how to ensure that G.A.S. is delivered safely—it is flammable and needs to be handled with care!

I have been approached by a colleague in Hong Kong to open a G.A.S. Station there this summer and have another possible opening in Shanghai later this year.

Asia is ripe for experiential, activity-based learning. In fact they are screaming for it. The system has created very bright people with very low expectations of the overall education experience.

My thanks to the whole NASAGA community, and in particular, the facilitator/designers of the Game Design Certificate program. I "Caught the Fire!" in Vancouver, and look forward to the magic of Atlanta. ∎

### About the Author

Jimbo Clark has a consulting company, innoGreat, in Taiwan. He provides services in content exploration and expansion; content co-creation; strategy/action planning facilitation; and coaching. He works throughout Asia and can be reached at jclark@innogreat.com.

# A WHOLE NEW MIND: MOVING FROM THE INFORMATION AGE TO THE CONCEPTUAL AGE

## BY DANIEL PINK

### REVIEWED BY BILL WAKE

Logical and linear thinking (so-called left-brain thinking) has been a key economic driver for the last few decades. But Daniel Pink, author of *A Whole New Mind* and *Free Agent Nation,* argues that a new era is coming, where we need high-concept, high-touch thinking to augment our logical side.

What has changed things? The first part of the book puts forward the idea that a combination of "Abundance, Asia, and Automation" has made linear thinking more available more cheaply than ever. It's supply and demand in action: when the supply goes up, the price goes down. As the relative value of logical thinking goes down, the relative value of holistic thinking goes up.

The second half of the book looks at various aspects of holistic thinking:

| Not just… | But also… |
|---|---|
| Function | Design |
| Argument | Story |
| Focus (specialization) | Symphony (synthesis) |
| Logic | Empathy |
| Seriousness | Play |
| Accumulation | Meaning |

Mr. Pink walks through each of these topics in separate chapters. Not only does each chapter explore its topic in an interesting way, it ends with a section on ways you can further explore the topic yourself. I easily took away a couple dozen leads to pursue.

So, is a new age here, where we need a "whole new mind" to participate? I feel the contradictions of a split mind right there: my intuition says, "These things matter," but my reason says "True, but the book didn't *prove* they're the next frontier." I'm left trusting my intuition.

This is not a typical creative thinking book. It certainly has creative ideas, but doesn't focus on any method. And it's not a globalization book, even though that context is important. Instead, this book encourages you to find your own unique path, in a world where this shift in thinking will affect everybody. NASAGA members will enjoy this exploration of new mind-sets.

*A Whole New Mind* is published by Penguin Group, Inc. New York. ISBN 1-57322-308-5. ∎

## About the Reviewer

Bill Wake is a manager at Gene Codes Forensics, Inc., and is on a quest to find impossible objects. He is also a co-editor of *SIMAGES* and can be reached at william.wake@acm.org.

# THE HANDBOOK OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

BY MEL SILBERMAN

REVIEWED BY KATHLEEN KOSKI

When I was asked to write a review of *The Handbook of Experiential Learning*, I was excited. With a book of the size and diversity of this handbook, I would normally read a few chapters of particular interest to me, skim the rest and put it on the shelf for reference. Agreeing to write this review, however, provided me with the opportunity to read this book from cover to cover, including the chapters about topics that are outside of my realm of interest. And therein lay some of the great treasures of this experience.

The jacket of the book promises the reader that *"The Handbook of Experiential Learning* is a comprehensive resource that draws together contemporary thought and practice on a wide range of experiential learning applications from the best-known authorities on the topic. In this book, volume editor and leading experiential learning expert Mel Silberman presents a contemporary review of experiential learning in the workplace complete with models, applications, and innovative uses."

*The Handbook of Experiential* is organized in three sections:

**I. The Foundations of Experiential Learning** contains three articles dealing with, respectively, creating change through experiential learning, theoretical roots of experiential learning, and debriefing experiential exercises to increase learning.

**II. The Experiential Learning Models** has ten articles, each defining and illustrating a popular experiential training method such as role play, simulation, learning games, reflective practice, improv and so on.

**III. Training Applications of Experiential Learning** explores eight different training applications including emotional intelligence, diversity, leadership development, technical training and team training, and the use of experiential learning as a core strategy in these various applications.

The roster of contributors is, indeed, impressive including a number of NASAGA members and award winners: Garry Shirts, Bernie DeKoven, Clark Quinn, Thiagi, Les Lauber, Kat Koppett, Judee Blohm, Sandy Fowler, Kevin Eikenberry, Brian Remer, and Mel Silberman himself, of course. Other contributors also have impressive credentials. I felt that, as a reader, I was in capable, competent and very experienced hands.

However, it was the "models, applications and innovative uses," along with the "comprehensive resource" in the description that was intriguing to me. As a training

practitioner I am interested in this book for what I can learn about applying experiential principles and activities to my work.  In other words, if I am to invest in its substantial cost, I want to have a useful reference that will help me design experiential training and will give me activities and exercises I can use in a variety of situations.  I want some theory or general principles that explain a particular approach, along with examples of activities that illustrate the principles.  I want to walk away from each chapter, saying, "yes, I can use that."

*The Handbook of Experiential Learning* did not disappoint.  Starting from the introduction by Mel Silberman, it was chock full of principles, examples, activities and, yes, even some authors' experiences of learning.  The introduction began with a bang by describing the book's aims and also giving the reader a number of usable activities to illustrate main points.  The first chapter, Changing Attitudes, also by Mel, describes a very rich and practical model for designing experiential training to affect change in people's attitudes and behavior, along with a wealth of useful exercises.   "Yes, I can use that."  In fact, I am already looking at my own training designs with Mel's model as a checklist and I've made a few revisions.  The remaining two chapters of the first section are more theoretical and less practical than the first one but interesting nonetheless.

The second section with ten articles about specific training activities and their uses, is very practical.  Not only are most of the contributors generous with sharing

activities and designs, but they also give good advice about using them.  The best articles also provoke thought and creativity in the reader.  "Yes, I can use that, and I can adapt it for this or that audience or learning purpose."  One of the treasures that falls into this category is "Junkyard Sports" by Bernie DeKoven.  I wouldn't normally have read this article but for this review assignment—and what a treat I would have missed.  The activities are fun and interesting, especially creating a golf course from junk lying around. I can visualize using this one for different reasons with different groups—including a summer party!

In this section, the articles on role play, improv and reflective practice were particularly useful to me. In his article on role play Les Lauber is very reassuring to those of us who are hesitant to use this method due to a bad rap or previous exposure to poor role playing techniques

The third section has eight articles describing different training applications with experiential learning at their core.  Technical training and e-learning is way outside my realm of interest, but this article by Thiagi is pure delight—he takes the reader on an experiential journey of a computer course on IT service management and shows, rather than tells, how a computer course can be designed experientially.  For this cyber-challenged reviewer, it was the first time I had ever been attracted to the idea of learning by machine. I even wanted to sign up for the course!  For those who design computer courses, it is an invaluable guide.

I found the diversity and team building articles particularly interesting.

The other articles will be of interest to people who work with the specific applications. These articles are variously written: some, like leadership development describe a specific simulation, whereas others, such as emotional intelligence, describe activities and/or training principles that can also be incorporated into other applications.

Overall *The Handbook of Experiential Learning* is interesting and useful.  While not all twenty one chapters measure up to the promise of "models, applications and innovative uses" the great majority of them do.   In fact many of these articles gave me at least one idea to enhance my own training practice and some of them brought new approaches to my thinking about design.  Yes! Trainers can use this book.

*The Handbook of Experiential Learning* is available from Pfeiffer Publishing (http://www.pfeiffer.com/WileyCDA/PfeifferTitle)  ISBN-13: 978-0-7879-8258-4 ∎

*Editors' Note: An interview with the author, Mel Silberstein, can be found on page 14 of this issue.*

## About the Reviewer

Kathleen Koski, a member of NASAGA, worked in human resource management and labor relations in manufacturing before teaching adults at the University of Massachusetts.  Currently she provides training to teachers and managers in cross-cultural communication, multicultural group dynamics, and conflict resolution through her consulting company CultureWorks (www.cultureworks.biz), based in New England. Kathleen can be reached at kmkoski@cox.net.

# ORID IS TORRID

## BY DEBI BRIDLE

## Goal

To increase confidence and effectiveness at helping people reflect and learn together through focused discussion.

## Learning objective

To able to apply ORID when facilitating discussion.

## Participants

Any size group

## Time

90 minutes, as designed

## Materials

### Supplies

♦ Handouts for each participant
  • ORID Discussion Method
  • List of Sample ORID Questions
  • ORID Team Record Sheet
♦ Blank paper for each participant
♦ Flip chart paper
♦ Flip chart markers: black and red
♦ Masking tape
♦ Stop watch

### Prepared flip charts

♦ Goal and objective:
  • Goal: increase confidence and effectiveness at helping people reflect and learn together through focused discussion.
  • Objective: be able to apply ORID when facilitating discussion.
  • Bonus benefit: experience Thiagi's Classify framegame
♦ Road map: Introduce ORID Model; Play ORID is Torrid Game; Debrief ORID; Apply ORID
♦ Debrief Questions for ORID:
  • Describe the ORID model
  • What is your gut reaction to the ORID model?
  • What are some of the benefits of using the ORID model?
  • What are some of the challenges of using the ORID model? What might you do to overcome those challenges?
  • What are some of the benefits of using the ORID model to help others learn?
  • What will you use the ORID model for?

## Procedure

### Introduce this workshop and myself (5 minutes)

Refer to the flip charts: Goal/Objective and Road Map

### Introduce the ORID Model (10 minutes)

1. Distribute ORID handout and tell participants to take 5 minutes to read it and become familiar with the four phases of ORID.

2. Distribute to each participant the list of questions to be classified.
   • Explain that these are questions that could be asked in a facilitated discussion.
   • Ask individuals to silently review the first three questions and to identify the phase of ORID associated with each.

3. Ask participants to identify which phase each of the first three questions is associated with.
   • Ask them to explain why they chose the phase they did to show how it belongs to the phase it does.
   • Ask anyone who disagrees to explain why.
   • Clarify so that everyone understands why the "official response" is correct.

4. Invite and answer any questions about the ORID model.

### ORID is Torrid Game

(20 minutes)

1. Ask participants to form teams of 3 to 5 members each.

2. Explain the rules:
   • I will call out a question number.
   • All teams will review the question, identify the phase of ORID it is associated with, and record the appropriate abbreviation (O, R, I or D) on the record sheet

3. Explain scoring system:
   - I will announce the official answer for the topic, based on the opinion of a panel of experts.
   - Each team that selected the same phase will receive a point.
   - The teams will also receive an additional point for each team that missed the official answer.
4. Begin the first round:
   - Use the Master List to call out the first question number.
   - Ask teams to take up to 30 seconds to discuss the question, select the appropriate phase, and write their choice on their Team Record Sheet. (Or, to speed things up, you may choose to let them race to answer the question correctly first.)
   - Monitor the teams: Circulate to make sure teams understand what to do and are recording their response.
   - Announce official response: After 20 seconds, give a 10-second warning. When all teams have written their response, refer to the Master List and announce the official response. Ask for a show of hands of those teams that chose the correct response. If not all were correct, ask a team with the correct answer to explain why they chose their response. Then, ask the team with the incorrect answer to share its response and explain why they chose it. Emphasize that, for this game, the official answer is from the panel of experts.
   - Award points: Award a point for each team that has the correct response according to the panel of experts, plus additional points equal to the number of teams that missed this phase.
5. Continue the game for five rounds.

6. Coordinate an intermission: After the 5th round, tell teams to take 3 minutes to plan for future rounds. They can use this time to consolidate their learning and to review the handout. Pause for 3 minutes and then continue as before.
7. Conclude the game:
   - After 15 minutes (or sooner, if energy is draining), announce the conclusion of the game.
   - Ask teams to add up their scores.
   - Identify and congratulate the winning team.

## Apply ORID to debrief the ORID model (30 minutes)

1. Display the prepared flip chart, with only the first question exposed (fold the bottom half up to cover the other questions).
   - Ask small groups to come up with a concise description that they will share with the plenary.
   - After a few minutes, ask each group to share its response with the plenary.
2. Uncover the other questions on the prepared flip chart page and ask small groups to take 10 minutes to discuss the answers.
3. After 10 minutes, ask them to share the answers to their questions. Rather than each table sharing all its answers, ask one table for one answer to the first question. Then, ask another table for a different answer. Then ask another table for an additional answer, continuing until key points have been raised. Then, move on to the next question.

## Apply ORID to this workshop (25 minutes)

1. Say, No doubt you noticed that I followed the ORID model to debrief the ORID model. Now it's

your turn. For this final portion of the workshop, you will work in your teams to apply the ORID model to this workshop. In other words, I'd like you to prepare questions to discuss and debrief this workshop. Refer to the ORID Discussion Method handout you have and assume you're going to lead a discussion of this workshop. You'll have 10 minutes to write questions to discuss it. Then, teams will share their questions with the plenary.
2. Teams write ORID questions to debrief this workshop. (10 minutes)
3. Prepare four flip chart pages, each with a heading for one of the four ORID phases. One phase at a time, ask groups to share their questions with the plenary. Write them on flip chart paper. Try to get consensus on what stage each question belongs in. (15 minutes) ■

### References

Roger Greenaway's Active Reviewing Guide website at http://reviewing.co.uk/index. htm

*Framegames by Thiagi*, Sivasailam "Thiagi" Thiagarajan. Workshops by Thiagi, Inc., Bloomington, IN, 2004.

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### About the Author

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# Facilitator's Master List

| Sequence | Question | ORID Stage |
|---|---|---|
| | 1. At what points did you feel most involved? | Reflective (gut) |
| | 2. How did you feel at the end of the presentation? | Reflective (gut) |
| | 3. How well did you achieve your objectives? | Interpretive (so what?) |
| 1 | 16. What topics were covered? | Objective (what?) |
| 2 | 5. Name three feelings you experienced. | Reflective (gut) |
| 3 | 22. What will be our next steps? | Decisional (now what?) |
| 4 | 8. What are the implications of these models? | Interpretive (so what?) |
| 5 | 13. What is your reaction now? | Reflective (gut) |
| 6 | 6. What are our options? | Interpretive (so what?) |
| 7 | 18. What was most/least valuable? | Interpretive (so what?) |
| 8 | 21. What were your personal highs and lows? | Reflective (gut) |
| 9 | 23. What will you stop / start / continue? | Decisional (now what?) |
| 10 | 24. What would be most difficult for us to implement? | Interpretive (so what?) |
| 11 | 9. What did you see happening? | Objective (what?) |
| 12 | 7. What are some of the things we did in this workshop? | Objective (what?) |
| 13 | 14. What part of the situation made you most upset? | Reflective (gut) |
| 14 | 20. What were the turning points or critical moments? | Objective (what?) |
| 15 | 11. What do you want to take forward from this experience? | Decisional (now what?) |
| 16 | 25. What would have the greatest impact on our success? | Interpretive (so what?) |
| 17 | 10. What do you want to explore further? | Decisional (now what?) |
| 18 | 15. What should we do differently from now on? | Decisional (now what?) |
| 19 | 12. What happened next? What happened just before? | Objective (what?) |
| 20 | 26. When was the first time you noticed things starting to go wrong? | Objective (what?) |
| 21 | 19. What was really going on? | Interpretive (so what?) |
| 22 | 4. In what ways was the experience like/unlike work? | Interpretive (so what?) |
| 23 | 17. What was most different? | Objective (what?) |

# Handout

# ORID Discussion Method

Four steps:

1. **Objective** (what): Facts, information, sensory impressions
2. **Reflective** (gut): Personal reactions, emotions, associations, images
3. **Interpretive** (so what): Meaning, implications, significance, values, purpose, evaluation
4. **Decisional** (now what): Action, future directions, next steps, application

Roger Greenaway refers to these four steps as: **Facts, Feelings, Findings, Futures**

1. **Objective**: Focus attention on objective data and facts about the topic. What did participants hear, see, touch, smell, taste?

   For example:

   ♦ Let's walk through what just happened. What was the first thing I asked you to do? Then what?
   ♦ What were the main points of the article?

2. **Reflective**: Ask questions that bring out people's immediate reactions, feelings and internal associations with the facts.

   For example:

   ♦ How did you feel during the exercise?
   ♦ What did you like most about the exercise?
   ♦ What did you like least about the exercise?

3. **Interpretive**: Ask questions that highlight layers of meaning and purpose. What significance do people attach to a subject? What alternatives do they identify?

   For example:

   ♦ How might this exercise relate to the real world?
   ♦ What would be most difficult to apply in the real world?

4. **Decisional**: Ask questions that allow people to respond to their situation. Bring the group to resolution, where they clarify action and next steps. Include individual and/or group decisions.

   For example:

   ♦ How will we apply what we learned from this exercise in the real world?

# Handout
## List of Sample ORID Questions

1. At what points did you feel most involved?

2. How did you feel at the end of the presentation?

3. How well did you achieve your objectives?

4. In what ways was the experience like/unlike work?

5. Name three feelings you experienced.

6. What are our options?

7. What are some of the things we did in this workshop?

8. What are the implications of these models?

9. What did you see happening?

10. What do you want to explore further?

11. What do you want to take forward from this experience?

12. What happened next? What happened just before?

13. What is your reaction now?

14. What part of the situation made you most upset?

15. What should we do differently from now on?

16. What topics were covered?

17. What was most different?

18. What was most/least valuable?

19. What was really going on?

20. What were the turning points or critical moments?

21. What were your personal highs and lows?

22. What will be our next steps?

23. What will you stop / start / continue?

24. What would be most difficult for us to implement?

25. What would have the greatest impact on our success?

26. When was the first time you noticed things starting to go wrong?

# Handout

## ORID Team Record Sheet

| Round # | Topic # | ORID Stage | Game Points |
|---------|---------|------------|-------------|
| 1 | | | |
| 2 | | | |
| 3 | | | |
| 4 | | | |
| 5 | | | |
| 6 | | | |
| 7 | | | |
| 8 | | | |
| 9 | | | |
| 10 | | | |
| 11 | | | |
| 12 | | | |
| 13 | | | |
| 14 | | | |
| 15 | | | |
| 16 | | | |
| 17 | | | |
| 18 | | | |
| 19 | | | |
| 20 | | | |
| 21 | | | |
| 22 | | | |
| 23 | | | |
| | | Total | |

# THE HOUSE THAT CARDS BUILT: AN EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITY THAT EXPLORES THE DYNAMICS OF CHANGE

BY DAVID PILTZ

*Editor's Note: David Piltz was a participant in the Game Design Certificate program at NASAGA's 2005 conference.*

## Information and Instructions for the Facilitator

This is a fast-paced activity that allows participants to explore the skills needed to be successful in a changing environment. It requires the facilitator to take a role of "bad cop" and very quickly create the conditions that change—regardless of participant feedback or resistance.

## Learning Objectives

By the end of the activity (including the experience and debriefing), participants will:

♦ Describe their personal reaction to the changing environment

♦ Identify when changes become overwhelming to deal with

♦ Describe the role of resistance to change management

♦ List the potential emotions during a change process

♦ List the conditions for successful changes compared to unsuccessful changes

## Approximate Duration

1 hour (30 minutes for the activity; 30 minutes for debriefing, which can be connected to lecture/theory of a specific program)

## Recommended Group Size

16 – 40 people

## Materials

♦ At least two decks of cards per group; additional decks of cards provide for additional insights

♦ 4x4 squares of various color paper (lots of it)

♦ 8 ½ x 11 pieces of paper various colors (lots of it)

♦ Pens

♦ Timer or stop watch

## Preparation

This can be used as an opening, middle, or ending activity, and works best when it is integrated into a workshop on change, change management, decision making, problem solving, etc. Due to the nature of the activity, you may need to take into account any participant's physical abilities and revise as needed.

## Room Set-Up

The room needs to be large enough so that groups do not inadvertently interfere with each other.

## Facilitating the Simulation

1. Begin by creating four groups, with four to ten participants per group.

2. Describe the following story line to put the activity in context:

   Each group represents a department/unit in your company. In your company each department/unit gets its own funding to accomplish its goals. In addition, each department needs to compete for its share of the money at budget time. Whichever department/init completes the task completely and correctly is awarded 80% of the total funding for the year, and the rest is split among the other three departments.

3. Randomly choose (or ask the group for) one participant from each group. This new group is the judging group that will determine who completes the task completely and correctly. Have them move to a separate table.

4. Explain that each group will have exactly 25 minutes to build the biggest card house. The judges have final say in which group built the biggest card house. The biggest card house will be judged on both width and height. (Other than this description, be very vague on what width and height mean—just keep saying that the biggest card house will be judged on both width and height. This will allow for the group to be as creative as possible. Remember that the set-up should elicit the components of change and dealing with change.)

5. Give each group two or more decks of cards.

6. Answer any questions while staying vague.

7. Start the timer for 25 minutes.

8. Ask the judges to create criteria (that cannot be shared with anyone else) on:
    ♦ What does biggest card house mean?
        – In terms of width
        – In terms of height
    ♦ What interpersonal components should be judged?
        Note: You may or may not share with the judges how the activity will play out. It is a more interesting debriefing if the judges also have to change along with the activity.

9. After 5 minutes: Announce to all the groups that there is a deadline change so now you have exactly 15 minutes to finish.

10. After 5 more minutes (with 10 minutes left): Announce to each group individually:
    ♦ Group A: Take away the rest of the unused cards and replace with small pieces of 4x4 paper—the more the better. Instruct them to finish the project with the new resources.

    ♦ Group B: Add 10 – 20 pieces of 8 ½ x 11 pieces of paper. Instruct the group that a new requirement has to be met—the card house has to have ½ cards and ½ paper.
    ♦ Group C: Instruct the group that now, in addition to the house of cards that is being built, a detailed process needs to be submitted. The detailed process needs to describe how the house was created and what was done to guarantee quality.
    ♦ Group D: Instruct the group that their department closed. So the house they are building is useless. Destroy what has been created and reassign each member to the other groups (divide them equally). The destroyed resources may not be used by another group.

11. Describe to the judges what the new criteria are and that they need to now factor them into what they are doing.

    Note: It is not advisable to give each group or the judges a printed copy of the change. Since one of the components of change management is to reduce vagueness and interpretation, it is better to create them and debrief out their role in being effective and successful.

12. Let the groups work for the last 10 minutes, stopping the activity at exactly 20 minutes.

13. Give the judges no more than 5 minutes to make their decision.

14. Allow the judges to announce their decision and why.

## Debriefing

This activity can be debriefed using proven debriefing techniques. However it is best debriefed if the questions you ask are directly related to seminar content. This activity can be done before content is presented,

in the middle of the content being presented, or after the content is presented.

Develop the questions under the three main categories. Sample questions:

**What happened?**
♦ What components of change management did you experience?
♦ What stages of change did you experience?
♦ What emotions did you experience that are similar to experiencing change in life and/or work?
♦ What caused the group to be successful or not successful?
♦ What does it feel like to be unsuccessful in this activity? Why? In what ways is this similar or different to work and life situations?

**So What?**
♦ What does this activity have to do with understanding the concept of change or any component of change you want to focus on?
♦ What was the meaning of having one group be disbanded? How is that similar to life and/or work?
♦ What did it feel like to be disbanded? How is that similar to life and/or work?
♦ What did it feel like to be given new criteria in the middle of the activity? How is that similar to life and/or work?
♦ What did you do to welcome in new group members? In what ways is this similar or different to work?
♦ What role did the judges play? How is that role played at work?

**Now What?**
♦ What will you do differently next time you are experiencing change or leading change?
♦ What will you do differently next time you are dealing with

members who are new to your organization?

♦ What will you do differently the next time tasks are given in vague terms?

## Typical Participant Experiences/Insights

After the experience participants from the disbanded group tend to:

♦ Dwell on the fact their product was destroyed

♦ Empathize with new employees due to feeling shunned

♦ Empathize with those in projects where it seems nothing they are doing works

After the experience participants from the winning group tend to:

♦ Describe how their success was directly related to creating specific job roles for each individual

♦ Describe how their success was directly related to a leader emerging

♦ Describe how their success was directly related to innovative ideas in the beginning but that the original plan was not deviated from as changes took place

♦ Describe how each person trusted the others so they knew it would work

After the experience participants from the unsuccessful groups tend to:

♦ Describe how they had no direction

♦ Describe how the facilitator kept changing things

♦ Describe how the directions were too vague and meaningless

♦ Describe how their was no purpose to the activity

♦ Describe how they didn't learn anything

After the experience participants from the judges group tend to:

♦ Describe how the successful group not only did the project

within the constraints but worked well together

♦ Describe how the unsuccessful groups did not work well together citing interpersonal communication issues

♦ Describe how they wanted to offer ideas but couldn't and guessed early on who would be successful and who wouldn't be

♦ Describe how they empathized with those that were disbanded but felt good about the group that was successful since they integrated the new people in the best

As you think about the typical responses, you'll notice they tend to follow these patterns:

♦ High performers and 'good' employees (successful group)

♦ Those that can adapt and adapt well (disbanded group)

♦ Poor performers and those unwilling to take accountability for their actions (unsuccessful groups)

♦ Those who supervise (judges group) ■

## About the Author

Dave Piltz has been creating and offering training programs in leadership, organizational and educational change, communication, teamwork, customer service, and personal and professional effectiveness for the past 13 years. He has worked as a director of residence life for a liberal arts college, a graphic illustrator and technical trainer and writer for a large manufacturing company, and an internal OD training specialist for a Big Ten university. Currently Dave is the Director of Training Services and StrataKey Division of The Learning Key®, a company that specializes in developing innovative learning solutions. Dave holds certification in MBTI® and game design. He can be reached at www.thelearningkey.com or 1-800-465-7005.

# CRYPTIC CLUSTERS

## BY SIVASAILAM "THIAGI" THIAGARAJAN

A cryptic cluster puzzle is a combination of a word association test and a cryptogram.

The puzzle displays a list of items that belong to the same category.

The items are enciphered with a substitution code in which every letter of the alphabet is consistently replaced by another letter.

Here is a sample cryptic cluster.

---

Sample Cryptic Cluster

### Types of Training Games and Activities

```
U P W L Z   Y W A M J
_ _ _ _ _   _ _ _ _ _

E W L Z   Y W A M J
_ _ _ _   _ _ _ _ _

E R P J M L J
_ _ _ _ _ _ _

E P A T H V M L   Y W A M J
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _   _ _ _ _ _

Z C E M   Y W A M J
_ _ _ _   _ _ _ _ _

C E M U L M W B M L J
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

C A T L P K   Y W A M J
_ _ _ _ _ _   _ _ _ _ _

P T M I M L J
_ _ _ _ _ _ _

T W T M L - W I Z - T M I E C R   Y W A M J
_ _ _ _ _ - _ _ _ - _ _ _ _ _ _   _ _ _ _ _

L P R M - T R W N J
_ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _ _

J C A H R W V C P I J
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
```

---

## How to Solve

Here are some tips for solving cryptic cluster puzzles:

♦ The most commonly used letters of the English language are e, t, a, i, o, n, s, h, and r. Find the most-frequently occurring letters in the cryptic cluster list and try substituting these letters.

♦ The letters that are most commonly found at the beginnings of words are t, a, o, d, and w.

♦ The letters that are most commonly found at the ends of words are e, s, d, and t.

♦ The most common word endings are -ed, -ing, -ion, -ist, -ous, -ent, -able, -ment, -tion, -ight, and -ance.

♦ The most frequent double-letter combinations are ee, ll, ss, oo, tt, ff, rr, nn, pp, and cc.

- The double letters that occur most commonly at the end of words are ee, ll, ss, and ff.
- Two letters that usually follow an apostrophe are t and s.
- The title of the cryptic cluster gives a very useful clue. Make a list of words or phrases associated with this title. Study the letter patterns among these words and try to match them with the patterns in the encrypted words. (For example, if the title of a cryptic cluster is "Birthday Party," FGKKXXP is probably an encryption of BALLOON.)

Here are two cryptic clusters associated with the location and the theme of our 2007 NASAGA Conference.

**You'll Have to Wait**

Of course, we know that you won't cheat, but we decided to help you resist the temptation to peek at the solution

---

### All about Atlanta

```
WVRWIVW  ULWKMJ
_____  _____
WVRWIVW  GWSBJ
_____  _____
EWLVML  EMIVML
_____  _____
EMIVMIICWR  PRNATCE  TWLB
_____  _____  ____
EGCEB-DCR-W
_____-___-_
EII  EMIVML
___  _____
EPEW-EPRW
____-____
ZMRVW  WCL  RCIMJ
_____  ___  _____
YMPLYCW  VMEG
_____  ____
YPIM  SCVG  VGM  SCIZ
____  ____  ___  ____
GWLVDCMRZ-OWEBJPI  CIVMLIWVCPIWR  WCLTPLV
_____-_____  _____  _____
AWLVCI  RHVGML  BCIY
_____  _____  ____
IWJWYW  EPIDMLMIEM
_____  _____
TMWEGVLMM
_____
JVPIM  APHIVWCI
_____  _____
HIZMLYLPHIZ  WVRWIVW
_____  _____
```

before you have exercised your brain cells. So you will not find the solution to these puzzles in this issue. We will publish the solutions in the next issue of *SIMAGES*. ■

**About the Author**

Sivasailam "Thiagi" Thiagarajan is the Resident Mad Scientist at The Thiagi Group, an organization with the mission of helping people improve their performance effectively and enjoyably. He can be reached at thiagi@thiagi.com.

## It's Magic!

```
URWEB  AWYCE
_____  _____
EWLZ  VLCEB
____  _____
EPIOHLCIY
_____
ZCJWTTMWLCIY  WEV
_____  ___
GPHZCIC
_____
CRRHJCPI
_____
RMKCVWVCPI
_____
AWYCE  LCIY
_____  ____
AWYCE  SWIZ
_____  ____
AWYCECWI'J  WJJCJVWIV
_____'_  _____
LWUUCV  DLPA  W  GWV
_____  ____  _  ___
JWSCIY  W  SPAWI  CI  GWRD
_____  _  _____  __  ____
JRMCYGV  PD  GWIZ
_____  __  ____
JTMRR
_____
SCFWLZ
_____
```

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2.  CCEEEFINNORSST  AEFNRU.

    Its conferences          are fun.

3.  EEHLLNNOT  CDEHIILNOPSSSSU

    The online          discussion helps

    AEGIILNNORSTV  ACDEEEGGHILLNNSS.

    solve training          design challenges.

4.  EEEEHLNRSTTTW  AADEEGIMNPSSSX  IKLOOORTTUY.

    The newsletter          SIMAGES expands     your toolkit.

5.  ABEEEMMRRS  AACDEEINRTV  ACDDDEEIOTT

    Members are          creative and          dedicated to

    AAGGIIIKMNNNRT  CEEEEFFIMORTV.

    making training          more effective.

6.  ADNOT  IOPTT  BEEFFHIMMOPRS  EEFIRS!

    And to     top it     off membership     is free!

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