

PLAY FOR PERFORMANCE: May 2003

SERIOUSLY FUN ACTIVITIES FOR TRAINERS, FACILITATORS, PERFORMANCE CONSULTANTS, AND MANAGERS.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Masthead

Our mission statement, copyright notice, and cast of characters.

Textra Game

2-MINUTE DRILL

A fast-paced game for reviewing content from a booklet or a manual.

Guest Gamer

Interview with Leeva Chung

Experiential approaches to intercultural communication.

Game Announcement

INNOVATION STYLES®

Four different ways to be creative.

Book Review

Seven Life Lessons of Chaos Book Review by Mark Isabella

How to find peace amidst chaos.

Pithy Saying

Chance and Skill

How two important factors interact with each other.

Masthead

PLAY FOR PERFORMANCE:

SERIOUSLY FUN ACTIVITIES FOR TRAINERS, FACILITATORS, PERFORMANCE CONSULTANTS, AND MANAGERS.

Mission

To increase and improve the use of interactive, experiential strategies to improve human performance in an effective, efficient, and enjoyable way.

Editorial Roster

Editor: Sivasailam (Thiagi) Thiagarajan

Assistant Editor: Raja Thiagarajan

Managing Editor: Brenda Mullin

Editorial Advisory Board: Andrew Kimball, David Gouthro, Diane Dormant, Julie England, Kat Koppett, Les Lauber, Matt Richter, Steve Sugar, and <type your name here>

Copyright Info

The materials in this newsletter are copyright 2003 by Workshops by Thiagi, Inc. However, they may be freely reproduced for educational/training activities. There is no need to obtain special permission for such use *as long as you do not reproduce more than 100 copies per year*. Please include the following statement on all reproductions:

Reprinted from PLAY FOR PERFORMANCE. Copyright © 2003 by Workshops by Thiagi, Inc.

For any other use of the content, please contact us (thiagi@thiagi.com) for permission.

Subscription Info

All registered subscribers receive PLAY FOR PERFORMANCE free of charge.

However, to prevent us from becoming bankrupt, we have decided to adopt a Busker Protocol. If you like what you read, if you find it useful, and if you'd like us to continue publishing the newsletter, please feel free to chip in with any financial contribution. Our estimated annual cost for this newsletter is \$30,000. So we suggest an annual contribution of \$30 (which is less than one-third the subscription cost of Thiagi's earlier paper-based newsletter). We would appreciate any amount that you send us, but make sure it is less than \$30,000 (since we don't want to make a profit). You can mail your check to Thiagi, 4423 East Trailridge Road, Bloomington, IN 47408 or call us at (812) 332-1478 to charge the amount to a credit card. Or you can [charge your credit card online](#), through Workshops by Thiagi, Inc. Please let us know if you need an invoice for financial record keeping.

Feedback Request

Thiagi believes in practicing what he preaches. This is an interactive newsletter, so interact already! Send us your feedback, sarcastic remarks, and gratuitous advice through email to thiagi@thiagi.com . Thanks!

[\[Table of Contents\]](#)

Textra Game

2-MINUTE DRILL

Textra Games combine the effective organization of well-written documents with the motivational impact of training games. Participants read a handout, booklet, reprint, or a chapter in a book and play a game that uses peer pressure and peer support to encourage the recall and transfer of what they read.

Here is a fast-paced *textra* game for reviewing training content from product-knowledge booklets or technical reference manuals.

Participants

6 to 25. Best game is for 12 to 25 participants, organized into groups of four or five.

Time

15 - 30 minutes.

Supplies

Reading Materials. These are handouts, brochures, booklets, reprints, or manuals that contain the training content.

Question Cards. Each card contains a short-answer about the training content. You need 20-100 different questions, each with a different number. Prepare a duplicate deck of Question Cards for each group of players.

Answer Sheet. Type the question numbers and the correct answers for each question. Prepare a copy of this sheet for each group of players.

Game Instructions. Prepare one copy of the handout, *How To Play 2-MINUTE DRILL* for each participant.

Timer

Whistle

Flow

Distribute copies of reading materials. Explain that you will conduct a review game with questions related to the content and encourage participants to study the materials carefully. Depending on their length and complexity, you may distribute the materials several days before the training session as self-study assignment or set up 15 minutes of study time just before the play of the game.

Demonstrate the play of the game. Distribute copies of *How To Play 2-MINUTE DRILL* to each participant. Explain that this handout contains instructions for both the player and the Game Master. Pause while participants read the instructions. Then, ask for three volunteers to come to the front of the room. Explain that you will be the Game Master for the first round and demonstrate the play of the game. Invite players to follow along by referring to the instruction sheet as they watch the game in action. At the end of the 2-

minute demonstration, point out that every member of a group will have a turn to be the Game Master.

Organize groups. Divide participants into two to five groups, each with three to five players. It does not matter if some teams have an extra participant. Explain that the players in each group compete with each other.

Distribute cards. In each group, select a player to be the first Game Master. Give a question deck to each Game Master.

Begin the first round. Start the timer and blow the whistle. Ask Game Masters to conduct the game with their group.

Conclude the first round. At the end of 2 minutes, blow the whistle again and ask players to stop. Instruct each player to count the number of Question Cards that were correctly answered. This is the player's score for the first round.

Conduct the second round. Ask the Game Masters to collect the cards, shuffle them, and give them to the new Game Master (the person seated to the left of the previous Game Master). Conduct the game as before.

Repeat the procedure. Continue playing additional rounds of the game until every member of each group has had a turn at being the Game Master.

Conclude the game. After the final round, identify the player (or players) with the highest total score in each group. Congratulate these players as the winners.

[\[Table of Contents\]](#)

Handout

How To Play 2-Minute Drill

Object of the game. To rapidly and accurately answer as many of the questions as possible during 2-minute rounds of play.

Instructions to Players

Receive a card. When the facilitator blows the whistle, the Game Master will give you a question card.

Answer the question. As soon as possible, yell out the card number and the answer. If you don't know the answer, make an educated guess.

Replace the Question Card. Wait for the Game Master to repeat your card number and tell whether your answer is correct or not. If the Game Master says that your answer is correct, place the Question Card in front of you. If the Game Master says your answer is incorrect, give the card back to Game Master. In either case, get another Question Card from the Game Master.

Continue playing. Repeat the process, trying to give as many correct answers as possible within the 2-minute period. When the Game Master stops the round, count the number of cards that you correctly answered. This is your score for the round.

Play the next round. The game will be repeated for several 2-minute rounds. Use the same procedure during each round, except during the round when you are the Game Master.

Instructions to Game Masters

Get ready. Get a deck of Question Cards from the facilitator. Also get a copy of the Answer Sheet.

Begin the round. Wait for the facilitator to blow the whistle. Immediately give each player a Question Card.

Listen for answers. In a little while, players will begin yelling out card numbers and answers. Since they will not be taking turns, this will be a chaotic activity.

Give feedback to players. Check your Answer Sheet for the card number that you heard first. If the player's answer is correct, say "Correct!" and give the player a new card. The player will place the correctly answered card in front of her. If the player's answer is incorrect, give the correct answer, and take the Question Card back from the player. Place the incorrectly answered card at the bottom of the deck and give another

Question Card to the player.

Do several things at the same time. Keep track of the numbers and answers yelled out by players. Call out the next number that you heard and give appropriate feedback. Repeat the process.

Conclude the round. Keep repeating the process until the facilitator blows the whistle again. Ask each player to count the correctly answered cards to determine the score for this round. Collect all the cards, place them at the bottom of the deck, and give the deck to the next Game Master. Also give the new Game Master the Answer Sheet.

[\[Table of Contents\]](#)

Guest Gamer

*This column features interviews with outstanding designers and users of interactive experiential strategies. Our guest this month is Leeva Chung who modestly describes herself as a "relative baby in the area of designing games — but an expert in playing them"! Leeva is assistant professor of Communication Studies at University of San Diego. A book that Leeva co-authored (with Dr. Stella Ting-Toomey) called **Understanding Intercultural Communication** will be published soon by Roxbury Press.*

Interview with Leeva Chung

Thiagi: Leeva, what's your specialty area?

Leeva: My specialty area is intercultural communication. My specialty teaching area is small group communication.

Thiagi: How did you get into using games in your classroom?

Leeva: I always loved to play games as a child. But after many years of schooling, I never thought the two can co-exist: teaching and games. One summer, back in 1992, I was helping out my mentor and master degree advisor, Stella Ting-Toomey. I just came back from a weekend trip to San Francisco and brought her a bag of 50 fortune cookies.

We decided right then and there to play a game of "who gets a fortune cookie?"

Then in 1997, I co-taught a course for the Summer Institute for Intercultural Communication. I had a free week and decided to take a workshop on interactive, experiential learning that I had heard so much about. Although it was only a three-day workshop, I was completely transformed. It inspired me to add games as a component in my classes and read more about game playing in general.

Thiagi: How do your students respond to your games and activities?

Leeva: I see how my participants and clients are deeply affected by games. Some games that I use are fun and simple to get across an easy concept. Others games are deep. It takes time to debrief the game, to reconcile participants' experiences with what they can learn from the game and take away from it.

In general, all my students love games. They really may not initially enjoy "playing" the game, but with time really get into it. when I use games in the class setting for 16 weeks, it makes my job so much easier and ensures that my students are learning, reflecting, and experience internal rumblings. They learn more about themselves and about what it means to be a "team" member

Thiagi: What advice do you have to newcomers about using training games?

Leeva: My first advice is to make sure you actually play the game. See what kind of reaction you get from the game, and then think about what you want your participants to learn. Does the game highlight the particular concept? Can you make the game longer or shorter? What are your constraints and how can you adjust the game to meet these constraints?

Next, be excited about playing games. There is nothing more deadly than a stone face and lack of interest in game facilitator. What you project will come back ten fold. So if you appear to be enthusiastic, then your participants will pick up on the enthusiasm.

Thiagi: What advice do you have to trainers for getting acceptance for the use of games?

Leeva: At the university, I am known as the queen of game playing or experiential

education. Depending on my target audience, I use both these terms. I tell my students that games are the only way for me to facilitate their learning in the classroom. Games inspire us to learn more about ourselves, to complement our knowledge, and a teaching methodology that works effectively.

Thiagi: In your opinion, what are the most important characteristics of a facilitator?

Leeva: Energy. Enthusiasm. Skill at debriefing. Skill at presenting the rationale for the game. Familiarity with games.

Thiagi: What type of facilitator do you dislike?

Leeva: Someone who plays a game and moves on, leaving everyone wondering what the heck just happened. I believe that the three most important aspects of any game are to debrief, debrief, debrief.

Thiagi: What are the most important characteristics of an effective instructional game?

Leeva: Simple, easy-to-follow instructions. Easy for a player to quickly get into the role.

Thiagi: What types of games do you use most frequently?

Leeva: It depends on my mood. During every semester I use a card game where people treat others based on the card on their forehead (joker included). I also a nonverbal violation game and a videotape activity to find out what is going on in a scene from an international movie.

Thiagi: What is your prediction about the future of games?

Leeva: This is definitely a breakout field. It is the way of our future, an alternative approach to creative expression and learning.

[\[Table of Contents\]](#)

Game Announcement

INNOVATION STYLES®

Do you think that all creative people conform to the mad scientist stereotype? William Miller (author of *The Creative Edge* and the award-winning *Flash of Brilliance: Inspiring Creativity Where You Work*) identifies four different types of creative people with different innovation styles:

- *Experimenting*. People with this style emphasize fact finding and information gathering. They are curious, practical, and good team players.
- *Exploring*. People with this style thrive on the unknown and unpredictable. They like to explore uncharted territory. They like challenges and dislike routines.
- *Modifying*. People with this style move forward one step at a time, building on what they already know to be true and proven. They are precise, reliable, efficient, and disciplined.
- *Visioning*. People with this style focus on long-term goals and mission. They have a vision of what they want to create. They are persistent, determined, hard working, and visionary.

INNOVATION STYLES®: *The Game*

Working with William Miller and his associates, Thiagi has designed a series of card and board games to explore the framework of innovation styles. By playing these games, you learn about the characteristics, behaviors, attitudes, thoughts, feelings, expectations, problems, strategies, and tactics associated with four different innovation styles.

Board Game

This is how you play the board game:

During a round, you receive 10 cards. Review the statements on these cards and pick out the cards that belong to a specific innovation style. Present one of these cards, and if nobody objects, throw a die and move forward on the game board.

If somebody objects, talk it over with the objector. If neither of you can persuade the

other, check the *Feedback Table* for the official answer. If you are right, the objector moves back two spaces. You throw the die and move forward. If you are wrong, you move back two spaces. The objector throws the die and moves forward.

Follow the same procedure with each of the ensuing deals.

Chance cards add excitement to the game. When you pick one up, you may move farther forward or move someone else's piece backward.

Win the game by being the first player to reach the FINISH space on the game board.

Card Games

In addition to board game, you can play eight fast-paced card games with the same deck of cards. The *Facilitator's Guide* describes each game in detail from both the player's and the facilitator's points of view.

What Does The Game Package Contain?

Game board. Six tiles with a total of 30 spaces for keeping track of the players' progress.

Game cards. 105 cards, each with a statement associated with one of the four innovation styles.

Chance cards. 15 cards, each with good news to the player who picks it up.

Game pieces. Plastic pieces of different colors, one for each player or team.

Selection die. A six-sided die used to choose a specific innovation style.

Movement die. A die with the numbers 1-3 used for determining how far the player moves.

Reference Card. A one-page job aid that summarizes the key features of the innovations styles.

Feedback Table. A reference table which lists the card numbers and the correct style associated with each.

Game Flow Summary. A one-page checklist with the basic rules of the game.

Classification Exercise. A 5-page handout for a follow-up activity that requires the players to classify all statements from the game cards.

Transparency masters. Four reproducible pages summarizing important facts about each innovation style.

What's In The Facilitator Guide?

- Basic information about the game.
- List of supplies.
- Detailed instructions for procedures before, during, and after the game.
- Debriefing questions.
- Variations.
- Copies of all reproducible materials.

How Many People Can Play The Game?

The board game is typically played by 2-16 players. With fewer than 5 players, each plays individually. With 5 or more players, they play in teams. The card games accommodate different numbers of people, from 1 to 30.

How Long Do The Games Last?

A typical board game requires 30-45 minutes. The play time can be shortened or lengthened easily.

How To Order

The INNOVATION STYLES® board-and-card game package costs \$89 (plus \$8.50) for shipping. You can order the kit through [our online store](#) or by calling (812) 332-1478.

[\[Table of Contents\]](#)

Book Review

Seven Life Lessons of Chaos **Book Review by Mark Isabella**

It seems like more and more of us are experiencing lives that feel out of control: too much to do, too little time, too much uncertainty, too little control. Just when we think we have a handle on our affairs, something unexpected occurs, throwing us back into the whirlwind of turbulent change. To cope with all of this turmoil and confusion, we seek guidance in how to deal with the stress and strain of everyday life. Too often we attempt to exert control over events and people. The result: more chaos, more confusion, and more pain.

In their book, *Seven Life Lessons of Chaos: Spiritual Wisdom from the Science of Change*, John Briggs and F. David Peat provide useful strategies for embracing chaos. Employing examples from science, nature, and mythology, the authors offer insights into the nature of chaos. They also provide ideas for flowing with change in ways that enhance joy, creativity, and mindfulness.

The book's recommendations include:

- Avoid attempts to predict, control, or manipulate events.
- Recognize the opportunities for creativity in the midst of chaos.
- Appreciate aspects of changing conditions that add a sense of mystery and magic to our lives.
- Use subtle influences to create widespread impact.
- Use collaboration and self-organization to build community in chaotic situations.
- Appreciate the paradoxical nature of life, and harness the power of polarity management.
- Create an environment in which psychological "flow" can occur, even in times of significant change.

Briggs and Peat take complex concepts and make them accessible to those lacking a background in the sciences. Their clear, engaging style helps the reader grasp the relationships between the chaos that exists in nature and that occurs in our daily lives.

In reading the book, I benefited most from the renewed recognition that chaos can produce amazing opportunities for growth and creativity. That lesson alone provides me with a sense of optimism when I feel disoriented, fearful, or confused.

I recently used the authors' insights in facilitating the start-up of a project team. I sometimes get frustrated with the "messy" group process that accompanies the first few meetings of a newly formed team. I'm inclined to rush in and try to fix problems associated with that phase of the team's work. The book encouraged me to trust team members as I created space for self-organization to occur. This approach allowed me to help the team take responsibility for its development, which will lead to a greater sense of competence and self-sufficiency among its members.

I believe trainers, consultants, facilitators, and managers will find many applications for the authors' advice. This book will help you cope with complexity, benefit from change, and find peace amidst chaos.

Seven Life Lessons of Chaos: Spiritual Wisdom from the Science of Change by John Briggs and F. David Peat, New York: HarperPerennial, 1999. 207 pages. Price \$13.00. ISBN: 0-06-093073-X.

[\[Table of Contents\]](#)

Pithy Saying

Chance and Skill

All games of chance contain elements of skill; all games of skill contain elements of chance.

The elements of skill in playing LOTTERY require you to compute your chances, curb your unrealistic hopes, and figure out if the excitement is worth the price. The elements of

chance in playing CHESS include how previous events have influenced your current mental state (and the mental state of your opponent).

To improve your POKER play, learn the skills of reading other players' body language and preventing other players from reading yours. To improve your BRIDGE play, accept the hand dealt to you and try to minimize your losses and maximize your winnings.

Remember, life too is a combination of skill and chance. Improve the skill elements by anticipating and accepting the chance elements.

[\[Table of Contents\]](#)
