

PLAY FOR PERFORMANCE: February 2003

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

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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.

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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!

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Jolt

\$20 GAME

I'm sure that you have handled a \$20 bill recently. Did you pay attention to the bill? Do you remember whose portrait is on this bill?

Here's a quick jolt that emphasizes the importance of mindfulness.

Pair up participants. Ask each participant to find a partner and sit (or stand) facing her. If one participant is left over, you become the partner.

Show the money. Ask each pair of partners to produce a \$20 bill. If any of the pairs cannot find a \$20 bill, lend them one or ask them to use any other bill. Ask the partners to hold a single bill by its opposite corners so that each participant can see only one side of the bill.

Begin questioning. Ask partners to take turns asking questions about the side of the bill they can see.

SAMPLES: How many times is the number 20 printed on my side? How many times is the word "twenty" spelled out on my side? How many digits does the serial number

have? What building is shown on my side? How many windows do you see in the building? Which direction is Jackson facing in the portrait? Complete this sentence found on my side of the bill: This note is legal tender for all debts, _____.

As soon as one partner asks the question, the other partner must give an immediate answer. Correct answers earn a point. Incorrect answers or no answers earn no points. The questioner should immediately give the correct answer.

Switch partners. Stop the question-and-answer activity after a few minutes. Ask participants to walk around and find a new partner. (They can also switch to the other side of the bill, if they want). As before, ask the partners to sit or stand facing each other and hold the \$20 bill in such a way that they can see only one side.

Continue questioning. Ask the partners to use the same procedure as before for asking questions, answering, and scoring points. Conclude the round after about 2 minutes.

Conduct a quick debrief. Ask participants to discuss how familiarity breeds mindlessness. What work-related supplies and tools do we take for granted? What are the dangers of ignoring familiar objects and people? What could we gain by paying attention to these objects and people?

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Textra Game

OPEN BOOK

OPEN BOOK is a quiz game that helps participants become familiar with the structure and organization of a reference manual. During the first phase of the game, individual participants review the manual and prepare 10 questions. During the second phase, participants form into teams and select their five best questions. During the third phase, you conduct a quiz program using these questions and some others that you have prepared earlier.

Participants

Any number. Best game involves 9 - 30.

Time

40 minutes

Supplies

- Copies of the reference manual
- Index cards
- Timer
- Whistle
- Flip chart (for keeping score)
- Set of prepared questions, each on an index card

Preparation

Prepare a set of typical questions that participants might look up in the reference manual. Write each question on one side of an index card and the page number that contains the answer on the back.

Flow

Brief participants. Distribute copies of the reference manual to each participant. Explain that the manual will enable participants to find answers to most questions that they may have in the future.

Assign the individual task. Tell participants that they have a 10-minute “survey” assignment. During this time, they should review the manual and figure out the structure. Participants do not have to read about any specific topic in detail or memorize any information. However, they should be thoroughly familiar with the organization of manual so they can efficiently find answers to questions.

Generate questions. Distribute 10 index cards to each participant. As a part of the reading assignment, each participant should write *at least* five and *not more than* 10 questions that can be answered by referring to the manual. These questions should not be “trick” questions but should represent the types of questions that a participant may have in the future. Participants should write each question on one side of an index card and

provide a page reference on the back of the card.

Announce time limit. Explain that participants have 10 minutes to complete the task. Indicate that the more questions a participant generates, the more chances she will have to receive high scores later in the game. Start the timer and begin the survey-assignment activity.

Organize new teams. At the end of 10 minutes, blow the whistle and ask participants to stop reading and writing. Ask participants to organize themselves into teams of four to six people.

Assign the team task. Ask the members of each team to share their question cards, remove duplicate questions, and select the five best questions. Announce a 5-minute time limit.

Get ready for the quiz show. Blow the whistle and collect the five question cards from each team. Tell participants that you are going to conduct a quiz show using the question cards they generated, along with a few additional questions that you prepared. This will be an open-book quiz and whichever team locates the correct information first will give the answer, reading from the document or paraphrasing the information.

Prepare for the quiz show. Review the questions generated by participants. From these questions and the ones that you had prepared earlier, select 10 good questions that will refer to different sections of the document. Make sure that these questions represent the types of questions that an advanced participant will have in the future.

Begin the quiz show. Briefly explain the following procedure:

- I will read a question.
- Teams can refer to the reference manual.
- First participant to stand up gives the answer.
- For some questions, the reference manual may not include any relevant information. In this case, the first person to stand up and proclaim that the answer cannot be found in the manual wins the points for that question.

- If the answer appears to be incorrect, any participant from another team may challenge by giving the correct answer.
- If there is no challenge, and if the answer is correct, the team gets 2 points. If there is no challenge, and if the answer is incorrect, nobody gets any points.
- If there is a challenge and if the challenger is correct, challenger gets 2 points and the incorrect team loses 1 point.
- If there is an invalid challenge (if the original answer is correct), the original team gets 2 points and challenging team loses 1 point.

Conduct the quiz show. Read the first question. Identify the person who stood up first. Listen to the answer. Listen to any challenges. Award score points. Update the flip-chart score board. If necessary, discuss the answer and clarify any misconceptions. Repeat the procedure, and continue for 10 minutes.

Identify the winning team. Congratulate members of the team with the highest score.

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Tip

Rules for Rules

The success of a game depends to a large extent on the way its rules are presented. Here are few thoughts about the presentation of printed rules:

Keep a consistent point of view. Write your rules as a set of instructions to the facilitator. Don't confuse the reader by shifting from instructions to the *facilitator* to instructions to the *player*. Give instructions instead of describing what is going to happen.

Present the rules in a chronological order. Begin from the beginning of the game ("briefing") and end with post-game activities ("debriefing").

Break the rules into small, consistent steps. Make sure each rule deals with a single

activity or decision. Stick to the same level of detail in presenting different rules.

Begin each rule with a summary sentence. Print this sentence in bold letters. Later, when facilitators want to quickly refresh their memory, they can scan this sentence instead of reading the entire paragraph.

Use examples to clarify complex rules. One picture is worth 10,000 words—and so is a clear example. Print your examples in italics for ease of reference.

Don't clutter up the rules with too many variations. Present a lean set of rules to explain the play of the game. Use a *Variations* section to present instructions on how to adjust the basic game to suit local constraints and needs.

Provide a summary outline of the rules. Facilitators can use this job aid during the game and during its debriefing.

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Event Alert

How To Use Training Games and Activities

For the past couple of years, I have been so busy conducting in-house workshops for client organizations that I have been ignoring public workshops. I miss these exciting events so much that I have decided to offer a one-day public workshop.

What?

In this workshop you will learn about interactive training strategies by participating in interactive training strategies. You will experience a variety of training methods including simulations, roleplays, card games, board games, puzzles, framegames, and jolts. You will explore techniques for reducing your fear of facilitation, conducting different types of interactive activities with groups of different sizes, handling disruptive participants, and debriefing participants to increase the impact of learning activities.

When?

The workshop will be held on Tuesday, April 1, 2003 from 8:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

Where?

San Diego, California, USA. The session will take place on the Qualcomm campus. We will provide you with directions and suggestions for places to stay when you register.

How Much?

US\$299.

To Register

[Visit our online store.](#) Or in the USA, call us toll free at 1-800-996-7725.

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Interactive Lectures

Six More Interactive Lectures

For the past four months, we have been reviewing interactive lectures that incorporate highly motivating game elements, yet give you complete control of the instructional session.

Here are brief summaries of six more interactive lecture designs.

19. ITEM LIST

Basic idea. Participants review a list of items in a handout and select a few that need detailed explanation. Presenter clarifies these items.

Application. This lecture game is especially useful when the instructional content can be organized into a list of items.

Sample topics. Basic principles of message design. Gender differences in communication styles. Negotiation principles. Guidelines for conducting a workshop. Trends in online learning.

Flow. Give a short introduction to the instructional topic. Distribute copies of a handout that lists key items for discussion. Ask participants to review to the handout and select a few items for clarification. Ask participants to pair up with a partner and jointly select an item for immediate clarification. Select a participant at random and clarify the chosen item. After completing the clarification sessions, ask participants to choose items they would like to challenge. Conclude with a review of all items.

20. JOB AID

Basic idea. Presenter steps through the use of a job aid. Participants form teams and use the job aid to work on an application exercise. Participants then work individually to master the use of the job aid on another application exercise.

Application. This lecture game is especially useful when the content involves a procedure and a job aid.

Sample topics. A worksheet for computing the price of a new product. A chart of copyediting symbols. A flowchart for selecting the best instructional method for a particular topic. An annotated diagram for troubleshooting a computer.

Flow. Distribute the job aid and give an overview of its features and use. Present an application exercise. Walk through the proper use of the job aid, eliciting as many suggestions from participants as possible. Comment on unused job aid items. Divide participants into teams and have teams work on a new application exercise. Provide assistance as needed. When teams have finished the application, have participants work on a new application individually.

21. MULTILEVEL COACHING

Basic idea. Presenter "lectures" to a small group of participants and tests them to make sure that they have acquired the skill. These participants become coaches and train the others.

Application. This lecture game is especially useful with motor skills and foreign languages where demonstration, coaching, and feedback are critical factors.

Sample topics. Conversational phrases in Swahili. Magic tricks. Origami. Using a digital camera. The Heimlich Maneuver.

Flow. Demonstrate the skills to four or six participants. Test to make sure that they have mastered the skill and certify them. Divide the certified participants into two teams. Ask the team members to individually recruit and train other participants. Each newly trained participant should be tested and certified by a member of the *other* team. After certification, participant becomes a member of the team that taught her. This participant now recruits others and trains them. The process is continued (over several days, if necessary) until everyone has been trained. At this time, whichever team has the most certified members is the “winning” team.

22. ONE, TWO, FOUR

Basic idea. Participants recall successful strategies that they have used (or heard about from others) for solving problems in a specific area. They share these strategies with a partner and later with a group of four people.

Application. This lecture game is especially useful when participants have practical experience in solving problems in a specific area.

Sample topics. Meeting management. Overseas assignments. Selling professional services. Time management. Firing marginal employees.

Flow. Before the session, come up with 4-6 subtopics related to the session topic. (Examples from the topic of meeting management: *disruptive participants*, *assigning action items*, *agenda*, and *time crunch*.) Announce the first subtopic. Ask each participant to independently recall successful strategies that they have employed or heard about. After a pause, ask each participant to find a partner and share these strategies. When this task is completed, ask each pair to team up with another pair and share the strategies again, this time with each person reporting on her partner's strategies. Roam among participants, eavesdropping on the conversations. Assemble the entire group, and invite participants to present any strategy that they heard during the earlier conversations. Give a brief report on effective strategies that you have used and heard about. Repeat the procedure with each of the other subtopics.

23. PRESS CONFERENCE

Basic idea. Participants organize themselves into teams and write a set of questions on different subtopics. Presenter responds to the questions in a press-conference format.

Application. This lecture game is especially useful when the instructional content is primarily factual or informational.

Sample topics. Marketing in the Pacific Rim. New-hire orientation. Features and functions of new products. Promotion policies.

Flow. Present a short overview of the major topic and identify three or four subtopics. Distribute index cards to participants and ask them to write at least one question on each subtopic. Collect the question cards and divide participant into as many teams as there are subtopics. Give each team the set of questions dealing with a specific subtopic. Ask the team members to organize the questions in a logical order, eliminating duplicates. After a suitable pause, play the role of an expert and invite one of the teams to grill you for 10 minutes. Repeat this activity with the other teams.

24. QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS

Basic idea. Participants respond to a questionnaire and compute their scores. Presenter helps them to interpret the scores and learn more about the topic.

Application. This lecture game is especially useful when the instructional content involves values, attitudes, personality characteristics, or preferences that can be explored through a questionnaire.

Sample topics. Career planning. Troubleshooting styles. Decisionmaking styles. Equipment preference. Organizational climate.

Flow. Briefly explain the topics covered in the questionnaire. Distribute copies of the questionnaire and ask participants to independently fill it out. When all participants complete their task, distribute the scoring key. Ask participants to score their own questionnaires. Distribute copies of a handout that explains how to interpret the scores. Walk participants through the interpretation of different response patterns. Discuss how participants can use the new information in improving their professional effectiveness.

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