

Simulation Games and Role Plays: Narrative Summary

Early in this project, Dr. Mark Hayse sorted through the boxes of simulation games and role plays, most created as part of Ted's simulation and discovery learning seminars at Michigan State University and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Mark's analysis of these learning games follows. Since few of the games were identified by creator, we assume many of the documents in this collection were created by Ted; but that many others were created by his PhD students over several years. If you recognize a game as your creation, please email Linda Cannell, lmcannell@comcast.net

Game Methods: Many of these games are similar to each other, tied together by a few common methodological threads including (but not limited to):

1. Role playing
2. Problem solving
3. Worksheet completion
4. Card sorting and token exchange
5. Individual reflection followed by group discussion
6. The maintenance of a tension between competition and collaboration

Game Themes: These games reflect a cluster of recurring themes including (but not limited to):

1. Social class dynamics
2. Cross-cultural differences
3. Teaching others how to design instructional games
4. The health and function of both church and mission
5. The interplay between listening and consensus building
6. The development of interpersonal communication skills
7. Values clarification at the inter-cultural, intra-cultural and personal levels

Game Principles: The operational principles at work within these games may be summarized (in part) by the following statements:

1. Effective teaching must surpass instruction and encompass the facilitation of social processes.
2. Abstract issues are easier to consider when they are made concrete.
3. Personal issues are easier to disclose through the use of artifacts.
4. Debriefing is an indispensable component of experiential learning.
5. Significant experiential learning can be gained in an hour or less.
6. The most effective learning is both personal and public (collaborative), not private (hidden from others).
7. Experiential teaching methods are best learned through lab, not lecture.
8. Creativity largely consists of adapting something else that already exists.
9. When a teacher designs good artifacts, s/he should keep them on hand for other adaptive uses.
10. Student learning outcomes will often exceed the scope of the teacher's intended outcomes.

Game Horizons: Considerations to be determined by those who use the games and role plays:

1. Game utility ("are they useful" as opposed to "are they salvageable")
2. Game complexity (in terms of instructor preparation and learner use)
3. Game redundancy (dis/similarities between games)