



Introducing Humor and Games in Training

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Apply humor principles in adult learning
- ✓ Troubleshoot when games go badly
- ✓ Develop your own games

Introducing Humor and Games in Training

Making training fun wouldn't be complete without some discussion of using humor in training. Are you naturally funny? Part comedian? If not, do not despair! You do not have to be funny to inject humor into your training. Some guidelines on how to use humor can help you to see it in the everyday things that take place around us. Just remember to be CREATIF.

Clean

Rehearsed

Energizing

Action oriented

Truthful

It makes a relevant point

Fun

Wavy Lines

Activity

Preparation

- Time required: 3-5 minutes
- Size of group: 10-100
- Materials required: None

Background

Lots of people have experienced the group wave – that uplifted arm movement that moves through stadium crowds like a wave crashing on water – so this can appeal to all audiences. It is a great energizer indoors or outdoors, and may become as elaborate as you dare to make it.

Procedure

1. Organize participants standing in a semicircle with everyone facing in and you standing at one end.
2. Demonstrate the typical wave by throwing your arms up and asking the person next to you to follow, and so on, all the way down the line. The last person brings his or her arms down, at which point all participants in turn put their arms down until it is back to you.
3. Explain that there are many types of waves. Ask them to follow with the same wave pattern each time that you lead.
4. Lead them by taking one step to the right while throwing your arms over your head and to the right.
5. When that wave comes back to you, take two fast steps forward while throwing your arms forward.
6. When that wave comes back to you, spin around on one foot 180 degrees and stand facing in the opposite direction.
7. Continue the activity with any other version of the wave you can think of. The rest is up to you. Have fun!

Variations

1. Ask a participant to be the leader or have participants take turns leading.
2. If participants are dressed appropriately, try waves from a sitting or lying position.

Tips

Have great fun with this; laugh with the mistakes, increase the speed, and perform outrageous moves.

Debrief

After the energizer, discuss it in a large group setting.

- On a scale of one to ten, how much fun was this game?
- Would you include it in your workshop? Why or why not?
- What preparation would you need to do before using this game?
- What problems might you encounter when using it?
- How could you prepare to avoid them?

Quick and Easy Games

Why These Games?

There are many games that can make an average workshop or dry content really come alive. When choosing a game, there are a few very important points to consider.

- The games must illustrate, illuminate, or somehow relate to the **training objectives**. Otherwise your trainees may feel like you are wasting their time.
- The games have to be considerate of the **participants' needs as well as ability levels**. If you have people all dressed up in suits and ties, chances are they will not want to get down on the floor. If your program calls for high participation levels, let everyone know beforehand so that they can dress appropriately.

Consider this story: One young and inexperienced facilitator was hired to do some stretches with a group of mostly senior citizens. The young woman took them through a short series of stretches followed by some aerobic exercises. One woman in her late 60's was wearing a pair of pumps and slipped and landed on her tailbone in front of 40 people. Knowing your audience, the setup of your training space, and their needs can help you avoid disasters!

During the next few sessions, we will go through a few examples of games that can be modified to suit your material, time frame, and audience.

Hot Potato

Preparation

- Time required: 5-10 minutes
- Size of group: Four to eight people

- Materials required: One beanbag per eight people

Overview

This is an easy way to introduce participants to each other, or to brainstorm.

Goals

- To connect to the objectives of a particular training session
- To provide an activity that introduces participants to one another
- To provide the trainer with a hip pocket assessment of participant objectives for the session

Procedure

Have each group form a circle. One member of each circle starts off with a beanbag. The first person starts by saying their name and stating one objective for the day. Then, they toss the beanbag to someone else; they are not permitted to toss it to the person right beside them, nor to the person that tossed it to them.

Variations

Instead of stating training objectives, participants could name their favorite restaurant, vacation destination, names of candy, etc. It is easy to tie this activity to your content.

Tips

This is a light activity. Keep the action moving and the mood fun.

Discussion Points

- What did you learn about your team members' expectations?
- What goals do your team members have?
- Are there common goals among the groups?

Passing Introductions

Preparation

- Time required: 15 minutes
- Size of group: 8-15
- Materials required: Ball of yarn

Procedure

Have participants sit or stand in a circle.

Give one participant the ball of yarn and ask them to find the end. While holding the end of the yarn, have them toss the ball of yarn to anyone in the circle.

The facilitator will ask the catcher one or two questions to introduce them to the group. If the group members do not know each other, they need to share their names before the facilitator asks them any questions.

Good questions will reflect the objectives of the day or can be more general like:

- What's your favorite food?
- What's your favorite color?
- Do you have pets at home? What are they?
- What's your favorite season?

The person who first caught the yarn holds onto a piece of it, while tossing the ball to someone else in the circle that has not caught it yet. Repeat the questions and tossing until everyone has had the ball of yarn. This creates a kind of web of yarn between the participants in the circle.

As facilitator, you can also toss the ball for a second round to narrow in on topics that will be covered today. For example:

- How excited are you to be here?
- How many people on your team at work?
- How long have you worked with the company?
- What is your favorite project you have been part of?

Discussion Points

- Did you learn some things about people that were unexpected?
- How will creating this web be something that draws us together throughout the day?

Variation

If space permits, you could have participants move to a table and drape the web over it as decoration for the day. This is very nice if you will also be having lunch at the same table, or completing other activities there at some point during the day.

The Orange

Preparation

- Time required: 5-10 minutes
- Size of group: Unlimited
- Materials required: Flip chart and an orange

Overview

A quick story to demonstrate that everyone's needs may be met if the right questions are asked.

Goals

- To look at ways of reducing conflict.
- To demonstrate how both parties may 'win' if their needs are identified before conflict arises.

Procedure

1. Let the group know that you are going to tell them a story about two young girls. Draw a picture of the girls on the board or flip chart.
2. Both young girls walk into the kitchen wanting an orange, but found only one orange left on the kitchen table. Illustrate on the board or show them the orange.
3. Ask the group what options the girls have. They should suggest things such as cutting it in half, buying an extra one, and so on. List the suggestions on the flip chart.
4. Now ask the group what vital piece of information we need to know but haven't asked for yet. Get ideas from the group until someone suggests that we need to know both of the girls' needs.
5. Had the needs of both girls been known at the start, the solution would have been obvious. This isn't the case in all situations, but it certainly is in some! One girl wanted the rind of the orange to make a cake. The other girl wanted the juice for a drink.
6. Discuss the fact that some solutions are impossible without first establishing the needs of all parties concerned.

Discussion Points

- Why do we tend to go straight for a solution before we identify the problem?
- How does this relate to situations at work or at home?
- How can we overcome this situation?

Variation

Create a similar story. For example: A husband and wife both want to use the car right now. Who gets to use it? What are their options? What are their needs? One wants it to go to the store; the other wants it to pick up the kids. If the needs are identified first, it leads more easily to a solution.

Original Source: Conflict Resolution Network, Sydney, Australia

Creating a Game

Preparation

- Time required: 45-60 minutes, but this depends on the size of the group and the designs the teams come up with
- Size of group: Unlimited
- A prepared PowerPoint, overhead, or flip chart with the Game Names (included in the PowerPoint slides)
- Copy of the 'Create a Game' worksheet for everyone (included in the workbook)

Overview

A fun activity to get participants thinking, moving, and talking. Generally used in a train-the-trainer type of course.

Goals

- To get participants thinking about game design
- To develop creativity within teams
- To energize the group
- To develop team spirit

Procedure

1. Divide the group into smaller groups of three or four people.
2. Tell the small groups that they are going to conduct a training course when they return to work tomorrow.
3. The course content is up to them. However, you are now asking them to design a game that can be used during a training session. They must select a game name from the list shown.
4. The game is to be no longer than five minutes in duration.
5. Give out copies of the 'Create a Game' handout to all participants, or ask them to refer to their workbooks.
6. After they have designed their games, they should introduce them to the whole group. If time permits they should also conduct them.

Discussion Points

- Who had the most interesting design?
- Are any of them relevant to today's training?
- Should any of them be submitted for consideration to publish in a future games book?

Variations

- Tell the group what their topic areas are.
- Select a game name for each group.
- The game titles can be modified if necessary.

Game Names

- Astronauts
- Bee's Behind
- Clowns for Sale
- Decontaminate
- Elephant Ears
- Flight Path
- Gallows
- Harmania
- Ice Berg
- Just a Minute
- Knights of the Round Table
- Land-O-Mania
- Mega Millions
- Nemesis
- Over Board
- Pull the Other One
- Quickly Quickly
- Roman Ruins
- Sirius
- That's What She Said
- Titanic
- Uranus
- Vasectomy
- Warlock Wizardry
- Xenon
- Yankee Doodle
- Zoom Zone Zillions
- That's What She Said

Game Design Worksheet

Name: _____

Time Required: _____

Size of Group: _____

Materials Required

Overview

Goals

Procedure
