Salad Bowl, a Game in Teamwork

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A game is a learning experience where the learner is actively engaged in analysing the experienced event or solving a problem therein. The learning game acts as a metaphor because it is, then, symbolic of real-life action. Experiential learning is more effective than rote or instructional study because the latter does not emotionally affect the learner as powerfully as the experience.

Salad Bowl has the typical 3-stage game structure of pre-game briefing, play, and end-game debriefing. Participants work in teams of 6-8 members to solve a puzzle. The absence of guidance or instruction compels them to ask questions about the unspecified problem, to explore options, and to be creative. Their initial solution is not the right answer. The end-game debriefing can cover many aspects of teamwork, depending on the size of the teams and the audience, and the age and diverse profile of the participants.

The primary objective of the **Salad Bowl** is to help the learner understand how teams work when they search for solutions to undefined problems. The secondary objective is to guide participant teachers in such use, so that they may use the game for their students.

Keywords: analytical skills, creativity, experiential learning, problem-based learning, role clarity, social loafing, system thinking, task design, uncertainty

This game, Salad Bowl, was originally designed and developed by Dr. Vinod Dumblekar. It was used in five international conferences and two national conferences in order to increase validity and reliability of the game. The results of observation, interview, and debriefing of each play were used to improve the conduct of this game. The details of the game are shown, below.

Learning objective to understand team dynamics from an activity in teams of four to ten members each

Game resources
Take a sheet of paper with images on both sides. It should be thicker and larger than the usual A4 sheet used in a laser printer. Cut it into a set of triangles, rectangles, circles, ovals, and semi-circles (about 20-22 pieces) of similar sizes. Remove one piece from each set, and collect them into a Master Set, which may also have other pieces. Pieces within a set should be stapled together, or kept in the same envelope without stapling.

Make sets in enough numbers so that each team could get one set for play. Make five sets more than the number of teams expected to play. One paste tube / bottle and one large white sheet per team are also needed. Cameraman should be on standby.

Game arrangements

Make some teams of four members, and others of 8-10 members. Make some teams of friends, and others of strangers. Make some heterogeneous teams – from same disciplines or locations, and others from mixed disciplines or locations.

Game process

Make teams. Give one ETS, one paste tube, and one white sheet to each team. Give few instructions as to what to do next. Each team must put together its ETS items into the original image. They may then paste those items on to the white sheet, which should thereafter have the names of all team members in large type in a corner. They may search for and remove the missing piece from the Master Set, which may be displayed on a table in the middle of the game room. Each team may then be photographed with its respective sheet. **Optional:** the best / top two team/s that complete the puzzle earliest could be given a prize for each member.

Feedback

Ask each team leader or representative to describe their emotions, frustrations, and excitement in the game. Each could also describe their process followed by them and problems experienced by them. Each team's feedback is the basis of discussions on team dynamics.

Debriefing

Discuss issues such as clarity of purpose, and orderly process in the team. Smaller and heterogeneous teams do better than larger and homogeneous teams. Many teams in a system will always compete.

Keywords: uncertainty, role clarity, experiential earning, social loafing, organisational design, team structure, task design, performance, competitiveness, and learning aggression.

Applications: Organisation Behaviour, Learning and Development, Team Dynamics.

Questions and Observations:

Situation profile: What is the problem? How do you recognize and describe a problem?

Role clarity: Do you know what you were expected to do? Does every team member know what is to be done? Does he know how to do it?

Excitement: Why did your team members like the problem? Was it the challenge, the mystery, the learning, or the teamwork?

Engagement: Were you more active than others in the team? Why do you think others were more or less active?

Communications: How did you respond to so many opinions from your fellow members? How did you disagree with your members?

Decision making: How do you solve the problem? Do you have authority, resources, and skills?

Solutions: Can we / you solve every problem? Can the solutions be far away, outside the organisation?

Team size: Is a large team more effective than a small team? How is the size of the team related to the problem, the resources and skills of its members?

Team profile: Does a team of friends work faster than a team of strangers? Why are strangers better or worse than friends, i.e. people you know?

Competition: Did your team solve the problem? Did your team solve earlier than others?

GAME AGENDA

ACTIONS	DETAILS	OBJECTIVES	MINUTES
INTRODUCTION	Welcome Objectives of game play Not everything will be explained	To explain the agenda for the gaming experience	5
TEAMS	15 teams, each of 5-8 members; Of friends and strangers Separate tables	To make the teams that play the game	10
RESOURCES	To each team, give a Master Set, a glue stick, flip chart, black marker	To distribute the tools of the game	10
INSTRUCTIONS	Team should elect a leader, and discuss and distribute roles	To describe the participants' actions in the game	10
PLAY	Teams put together the pieces; missing pieces are from central pool; then, paste them onto the flip chart	To give time to teams to execute the instructions	30
SELF-APPRAISAL	Teams review others' products	To study features, and learn for improvement	20
DEBRIEFING	Ten issues to be discussed by the game facilitator	To explore learning issues	20
FEEDBACK	Each team leader or representative describes his experiences; 20-Q may be administered	Players to express their feelings and learning	15

Thai interpreter will translate **game facilitator**'s instructions. Teams would be photographed and videographed during and after the game. Teams would need glue sticks and flip charts. **Twenty-item** feedback form to be developed to cover *team cohesiveness, excitement, challenge, motor skills, team work,* and *leader assessment*.

This game was designed by **Dr Vinod Dumblekar, MANTIS, New Delhi, INDIA**. Please use this game, with changes as needed. Want any help with **SYTHESIS**? Then, please contact discovery.learning@yahoo.com or at +91.9818631280. The game was presented in **THAISIM CONFERENCE**, 28-29 July 2016.

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