



The Gameshow: project and team work to develop interpersonal skills

Author: Kirk Mann

University of Leeds

Which courses is it designed for and how does it work?

- Used most effectively on seminar programme for 'Men and Masculinities' module (currently levels 2+3 but soon to be level 2 only)
- In the style of "Shooting Stars", students join teams divided into 'Kens' and 'Barbies'. Real dolls are used to indicate which team member is to talk and these must be passed around. Points are awarded to teams throughout the debate.
- Also used without dolls on Pensions Policies module (currently levels 2+3 but soon to be level 3).

How did you come to develop it?

- tried role play exercises and other team/group projects with varying degrees of success.
- Frustration with 'tutorials' containing 10-14 students where participation is uneven and allows freeloading by the less prepared
- "Asking questions and sometimes getting blank looks meant I found myself doing Vic Reeves impressions and charades as clues to students".

Benefits in terms of students' learning?

- Higher level of attendance and active engagement

Benefits for teaching?

- Enjoyable classes and more relaxed students

Feedback

On the plus side.....

Student evaluation forms suggest it is popular:

"made the subject interesting"

"some heavy issues were easier to understand"

"I felt more comfortable than in normal seminars"

"I now realise I should be saving for my retirement and should stop clubbing"

The downside.....

- This sort of work has a limited “shelf life” - Game shows themselves have a “shelf life” and what students are familiar with in 3 years time may be very different.
- It works because it is the exception to a more traditional (although not exclusively so) pattern of seminars and lectures ‘It can be hard work at 10:00 on a Monday morning and some students resolutely refuse to play -I have reverted to “normal” seminars on 2 occasions (out of over 40 classes)’

Issues raised?

‘Ways that this, and other project work could be formally assessed but the “freeloader” problem makes this very hard. (I tried videoing their classes and project work but this was both time consuming and highly subjective – how do you reward the shy grafter without giving the loud freeloader undue reward?)’

Excerpts from student guidelines

‘There will be 8 seminars for this module starting in week 2. You will be expected to prepare for each and every seminar. The seminars are organised into groups/teams and you will be asked to support, or contradict, the assertion that accompanies the seminar. The seminars will be student led - in other words you will do the work. However, we will act as “umpire”/chair/facilitator, previous experience suggests that if you take it seriously (or at least make an effort) it can be a lively and amusing way of addressing the material. It should also help you to develop your presentational and transferable skills (OOOH!)

A good idea is to try and use materials that are “visual” - OHPs, cartoons, music, newspaper clippings, videos, pictures from magazines etc. You can use whatever you like to make ‘your presentations interesting and we will try and help provide any materials you need.’

‘The list of seminars for each week has readings attached to the seminar topic. The seminar questions are also the non-assessed/formative essay questions. Further questions will be asked in the class and you “score” for your team if we award “ticks” for the points you make. The format is akin to a game-show (think of a cross between a normal seminar and “Shooting Stars” with me as Vic Reeves – and yes we will give clues “in the style of a club/pub entertainer”).

You “score” by making general relevant points, making theoretical points, providing evidence to support points, by mentioning scholars, by the way you present your points (OHPs etc) and by making critical comments/ observations.

The intention is to make the seminars/classes lively and amusing but we are discussing academic issues – so be funny but take the work seriously.’



**Social Policy
and Social Work
(SWAP)**

The Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Social Policy and Social Work (SWAP)
University of Southampton School of Social Sciences
Southampton
SO17 1BJ



Printed on recycled paper