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THE ART OF NEGOTIATING

Don M. McDonald, Troy University Montgomery

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this interaction is to help participants gain a better understanding of how negotiating involves clear objectives, creative give-and-take, and the value of not alienating ‘the other guys.’ Applications include industrial relations, team building, and negotiating in any setting. Colored paper, glue, scissors and tape are provided for creation of a work of art, but A and B teams at have different lists of objectives to achieve in the picture. Do not expect beauty; do expect noise’ Interaction takes approximately 20 minutes. The interaction communicates not only the basics of collective bargaining, but also the need to look at the larger picture of the negotiating process.

INTRODUCTION

There must be at least 2 participants, but may reach 50. Twenty to 30 is optimal.

Preparation

The room must contain tables that seat two to eight each. More than one table is preferable, even if groups at each table remain no larger than two. An odd number at any table is acceptable. Each table is equipped with one sheet of ‘A’ instructions, face down; one sheet each of red, white, brown, green, and blue paper, approximately 8V₂ by 11” each; one container of paper glue; one roll of adhesive tape, and one pair of scissors. In addition place an equal number of ‘B’ instructions in an adjacent room or other end of the same large room.

Procedure

Divide participants at each table into two approximately even teams. (One uneven member will not bias play.) Designate one team at each table as

Team A and the other as Team B. Inform them that they will be getting written copies of instructions later, and read to them the following:

1. Assign point values to each blank on the left so that the total equals the figure at the bottom left. These are the values your team agrees to place on each corresponding feature.
2. Make a list of possible scenes that would give your team maximum points.
3. Together the two teams produce one picture that gives your participants the highest possible scores.

Inform A teams that their instructions are face down on the table and to wait until B teams leave to discuss them. Dismiss or lead the B teams to their discussion location(s). Allow no more than four minutes. Inform teams when they have one minute left.

Bring the B teams back and have all participants seated. Require that no action begin and inform them that all art materials must be in the center of the table before play can begin. Inform participants that at the end of eight minutes (exactly) the pictures must be hanging on a wall, any wall, ready for judging, "and I do not want glue running down these walls!" Ask for any procedural questions before beginning play.

Signal play to begin: allow exactly eight minutes. Announce when half the time is lapsed, when one minute remains, and count down the last ten seconds. Stand out of the way of flying participants.

Ask teams to swap score sheets with each other at the same table and add up the other team’s score. Now they negotiate whether certain points were achieved.) Refuse to get involved in judging points. Afterwards, ask each pair of teams to add their scores together and write the total in large numerals on the picture they produced. Compare scores.

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Debrief

Two basic questions can lead to joint learning. These are "What helped your team gain points?" and "What prevented teams from getting points?" In answer to the first, responses may include considering the other teams needs, stating your own desires, asking questions, willingness to give and take, and creative partnering (e.g., names can be written and then covered with other materials, thus fulfilling objectives on both teams). In answer to the second, expect responses such as holding out for low value items, not knowing how much the other team values items, suspicion, preconceived ideas on the solution, trying to keep the other team from getting points, not working together

The second negotiation over whose points were valid, brings out the importance of establishing good rapport

with the parties with whom we negotiate. We never know when we may negotiate with them again later. Adding the A and B scores emphasizes that they are a single team on the larger scale. Seeking to defeat the other team may not maximize your own score. Labor and management do this when they don't see the bigger picture--they as a company (table) are fighting together for survival in the industry (room).

Discussion

Strong points of the simulation include that it communicates principles on the long term and larger scale of negotiating. It is also fun! It can be performed without complex technical support, but facilities must accommodate tables, movement, and taping materials to the walls.

APPENDIX

In addition to instructions, Team A receives:

Maximum points possible	Actual points Received
<u>0</u>	MINUS 1 POINT FOR EACH PERSON IN THE PICTURE <u> </u>
<u>10</u>	2 POINTS FOR EACH ANIMAL UP TO 5 ANIMALS <u> </u>
<u> </u>	EQUAL AMOUNTS OF EACH COLOR USED (EXCEPT BROWN) <u> </u>
<u> </u>	SCENE IS UNDERGROUND <u> </u>
<u> </u>	NO PENCIL, PEN, OR OTHER DRAWN LINES VISIBLE <u> </u>
<u> </u>	PICTURE IS WIDER THAN IT IS TALL <u> </u>
<u>45</u> = Possible high score	Actual score = <u> </u>

In addition to instructions, Team B receives:

Maximum points possible	Actual points Received
<u>10</u>	1 POINT FOR EACH PERSON IN THE PICTURE UP TO 10 <u> </u>
<u>10</u>	1 POINT FOR EACH 1" RED SQUARE UP TO 10 <u> </u>
<u> </u>	SNOW SCENE <u> </u>
<u> </u>	SUN SHINING BRIGHTLY IN THE PICTURE <u> </u>
<u> </u>	EACH TEAM MEMBER'S NAME IN THE PICTURE SOMEWHERE <u> </u>
<u> </u>	PICTURE IS TALLER THAN IT IS WIDE <u> </u>
<u>50</u> = Possible high score	Actual score = <u> </u>