

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

A Blueprint for Success: Constructing social and cognitive development of deaf and
hard of hearing adolescent students using team building games in the classroom

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By Jennifer M. Jones

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Student Name (print or type): >l<Lao r10 c Jon a.5

Faculty Supervisor (print or type): Deborah Simmons

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This thesis illustrates how experiential education, specifically teambuilding games, can be beneficial when used with adolescents who are deaf or hard of hearing. Teambuilding games can especially help advance areas of development in which these students are often behind. It discusses the areas of social and cognitive development according to several theorists and how students with hearing impairments fit into those specific theories. Also discussed are the characteristics of experiential education and teambuilding and which of those make it unique for students who are at risk for delays in social and cognitive development.

Through researching the various topics, this thesis organizes the information and shows how experiential education can provide a foundation for social and cognitive development in students who are deaf or hard of hearing. The main purpose of this work is to establish a link between these two and present the ideas to appropriate professionals, with the focus on present and future educators of the deaf and hard of hearing.

This thesis has also been organized into a workshop form using Microsoft Power Point to facilitate a presentation of the material to professionals to whom this will be useful.

HONORS THESIS ABSTRACT

Blueprint for Success

This thesis illustrates how experiential education, specifically team building games, can be beneficial when used with adolescents who are deaf or hard of hearing. Teambuilding games can especially help advance areas of development in which these students are often behind. It discusses the areas of social and cognitive development according to several theorists and how students with hearing impairments fit into those specific theories. Also discussed is the characteristics of experiential education and teambuilding and which of those make it unique especially for students who are at risk for delays in social and cognitive development.

Through researching the various topics, this thesis organizes the information and shows how experiential education can provide a foundation for social and cognitive development in students who are deaf or hard of hearing. The main purpose of this work is to establish a link between these two and present the ideas to appropriate professionals, with the focus on present and future educators of the deaf and hard of hearing.

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A Blueprint for Success: Constructing social and cognitive development of deaf and hard of hearing adolescent students using teambuilding games in the classroom

I can't find the red square piece ... Where's the other tire that matches this one? ..What if I put this on top. and add this...Now. I need that long green ...

CCCRRAASSSHHHH!! The hundreds of Legos pieces are dumped onto the floor as the bucket is overturned, giving me easier access to the parts I would find I needed. I have all too fond memories of playing with Legos as a child. I would sit and fit together endless combinations of pieces to reveal countless creations. Legos were my choice of building block, but children play with a multitude of tools used to build what their mind allows. From basic toys such as blocks, Lincoln Logs, and Duplos, to the more recent K'Nex and Mega Blocks, the idea of putting pieces together to create a more grandiose representation of virtually anything is a common theme in childhood. Children arrange pieces and build models of real life objects like their teachers organize lessons that will build upon their students' knowledge. Unlike the child who has an array of pieces and only the limits of his or her imagination to restrict him or her, the teacher has various obstacles to overcome in developing students' knowledge. The number of students in a classroom range, the class may have eight or twenty-eight students, but regardless, the teacher is presented with several different and unique students who each possess their own individual background experiences. This is one challenge a teacher has to break through. Instead of one foundation upon which knowledge can be modeled and built, there are multiple foundations that each lesson needs to address. In conjunction with this is the realization that each lesson may not affect each student in similar ways. For example, a lesson may add one Lego to an already existing model for one student, while

for another it may create a new addition of 10 Legos to an already standing creation. Knowing students as individuals and catering to their prior knowledge can give teachers an edge in developing lesson plans to address students' background knowledge and individual needs, ultimately enabling them to succeed. In deciphering students' background knowledge and recognizing their needs, teachers will exhibit a genuine respect and value of the students in his or her classroom. The purpose of this thesis is to address why and how teachers can incorporate team building, a division of experiential education, into their curriculum. In doing this teachers can gain access to their students as individuals in order to develop social and cognitive skills. Based on the argument and ideas presented here, teachers will appreciate the need for this type of intervention and create a blueprint for including teambuilding in a curriculum that will build upon each student's social and cognitive skills.

A teacher as an architect designs a curriculum plan that will enrich students' knowledge. Educators of students who are deaf or hard of hearing have an extra task of helping students to develop a strong foundation upon which further learning can be fostered. Students who have strong social skills are enabled to explore and develop further with their cognitive skills. Both social and cognitive skills are crucial elements that need to be attended to by the teacher.

Deaf and hard of hearing adolescents are especially at risk for delays in both of these areas. By understanding various theories of social and cognitive development presented by Erikson, Piaget, Bruner, Feuerstein, and Vygotsky, what they are and how they apply to deaf and hard of hearing students it becomes clear that these are two areas that need to be addressed in their education. Once the need has been identified, the next

task is to target that area. Examining the qualities of play allows us to take an interesting viewpoint on education. There are various elements that are a part of play which are existent within experiential education. The correlation between play and experiential education is imperative because it involves the functional aspects of play that can be incorporated into an educational setting while still promoting the emphasis on learning .. Teachers knowing and applying the magnitude of teambuilding in social and cognitive development can easily integrate experiential education into the classrooms in order to encourage development in social and cognitive skills. Overall, by learning about the students, their needs, and how to address them, it is obvious that implementing experiential education in the form of teambuilding games, such as those outlined here, can increase social and cognitive skills of their deaf and hard of hearing adolescent students.

Social Development

In order to be able to foster social development in students who are deaf or hard of hearing, we first need to understand social development. Social development is clearly mapped out in Erikson's psychosocial theory. Erikson defines eight stages in which there are conflicts to overcome. If a person can overcome the conflict presented, then that stage is fulfilled. A closer examination of these stages gives a better understanding of the social development of students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Two opposing labels that characterize the conflict the person is facing name each stage. A person in the stage is battling to achieve the one side and overcome the opposite. If the person does not settle the conflict then he or she is left still struggling with it.

Erikson's Psychosocial Theory of Development

The first stage in Erikson's psychosocial theory of development is "Trust versus Mistrust". Within this stage an infant or child can gain trust or develop mistrust. Because the infant is dependent on its parents, specifically the mother, he or she develops basic trust when a strong maternal relationship is formed. This relationship strengthens if the mother is present to care for the infant promptly and consistently when needed. Through this interaction the child establishes basic trust. However, if this strong bond with the mother or caretaker does not form, then the child has the possibility of developing mistrust. The feeling of mistrust continues until the infant or child can overcome that sense of mistrust and allow establishment of a firm bond. This stage can be affected by many factors. Unfortunately, developing trust is not entirely dependent upon the infant. The environment the child is in can hinder the development of basic trust. While there are multiple factors that can affect the relationship that develops between the caretaker and the infant, there are some that relate directly to a child who is deaf or hard of hearing. In order for basic trust to develop, the mother or caretaker must be free of conflict. Different conflicts within the mother could arise depending on the aforementioned variables that accompany deafness. For example, if an infant or child is congenitally deaf and has not yet been identified, the child has a chance of being deprived of social interaction needed to develop the relationship which would otherwise lead to basic trust. In this case, stimuli such as parentese, otherwise known as baby talk, or singing will not be accessible to the child because they are not visual. Another example that could arise may occur with a child that has been identified with a hearing loss. Oftentimes this diagnosis can cause tension within the mother. If the mother blames

herself or the child, she may have an overall unpleasant disposition towards the child. Those feelings will discourage her from spending enough time with the child in order to develop a strong maternal bond. These are only a couple reasons why infants who are deaf or hard of hearing have a risk of not developing the sense of basic trust outlined in Erikson's first stage of development, "Trust versus Mistrust (Scheetz, 2001)."

Regardless of whether a child is able to develop a strong maternal relationship and gain basic trust from the first stage or not, he or she is challenged with the second stage, "Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt". Within this stage, the child is becoming more independent and taking more risks. Acting in this way allows the child to develop an overall sense of autonomy. This also relates directly to self-esteem and self-worth, in that the child has pride in himself. Autonomy can be withheld from a child in which a sense of shame and doubt takes hold. Children who are deaf or hard of hearing face a risk in this stage for different reasons. First and foremost, if a child cannot gain basic trust from the previous stage it is difficult for him or her to progress and develop self-worth by acting independently. Also, parents are oftentimes overprotective of their growing child, especially if the child has a hearing impairment. Parents who are excessively overprotective suppress their child's need to explore and become an independent learner in his or her environment. It is common for development to begin to slow at this stage because of this inability to establish autonomous will (Scheetz, 2001). What is accomplished in this stage can be a predictor of how development may continue in following stages.

Depending on the way conflicts were resolved in the previous stages, stage three will be affected accordingly. The third stage of Erikson's theory of development

concerns "Initiative versus Guilt". Children in this stage are most commonly of school age. Here we see that the child has developed into his or her own individual. Now, it is clear that the student is anxious to grow and increase understanding by exploring and asking questions. Three characteristics of this stage include the child being more mobile, having more language, and increasing imagination. If the child is kept from developing a sense of initiative by engaging in these three, he or she becomes restricted and starts to have a sense of guilt for wanting to take initiative. How a deaf or hard of hearing child deals with this stage is dependent upon the previous stages. If the previous conflicts were not resolved it makes this stage much harder to combat. In the case of children who are deaf or hard of hearing, even if they have made it through the other stages successfully, it is not safe to assume this stage will be likewise. Referring back to the second stage, if parents are still excessively overprotective of their child in this stage, initiative is suffocated. By not allowing their child with a hearing impairment to explore his or her environment, whether this is within the house, the neighborhood, or the community, parents do not give them a chance to develop initiative. One of the most influential variables in this stage is that of language. Children who are not able to express themselves or pose questions, coupled with parents who cannot understand the questions or answer them effectively can lessen the amount of learning and understanding that is so important in this stage of development. Additionally, because this stage occurs when students are starting school, that element alone is capable of adding confusion and emotional trauma. One important factor to keep in mind is that students whose parents are deaf or hard of hearing themselves may experience a completely different transgression of these stages because communication is more possible than with parents

who have no knowledge of sign language and are learning as their child is. Overall, this stage is crucial because the conflict may or may not be overcome despite what occurred in the previous stages (Scheetz, 2001).

The fourth stage of Erikson's theory of development can be greatly influenced by the child's educational setting and his or her educator(s). This stage, "Industry versus Inferiority" is a continuation of the previous stages because self-worth is further developed. Children in this stage develop self-worth and a feeling of being industrious by taking on and accomplishing certain tasks. The danger here is that if the task presented is too difficult the child may become frustrated and start to regard himself or herself as inferior. The educational aspect plays a large role here because tasks faced in school are main determinants of industry or inferiority. The environment the child is in and how people there act towards certain behavior, shapes how the child regards himself or herself. If expectations are set too high, inferiority can take hold. If they are set too low, children could develop a false sense of industry which could later be challenged when a task arises that is too difficult and inferiority sets in (Scheetz, 2001). This is an important stage for educators of students who are deaf or hard of hearing to be aware of because they will be responsible for providing students with developmentally appropriate tasks to enable them to gain a sense of industry.

Educators of students who are deaf or hard of hearing also have to be aware of the fifth stage of Erikson's theory of development, "Identity versus Role Diffusion". This stage comes about when children become adolescents. Independence is even more increased in this stage, as adolescents are increasingly involved with their peers. Peer pressure becomes an issue while adolescents struggle to resolve the conflict in this stage,

which is developing a sense of identity. When an adolescent cannot develop a sense of identity, role diffusion occurs instead. Role diffusion is when the adolescent cannot define his or her identity and instead finds himself or herself playing various different parts. This is a unique stage for adolescents who are deaf or hard of hearing because it is essential that he or she confront his or her deafness. Adolescents with a hearing impairment come to a realization of being different. Most often this is the stage where adolescents choose to identify themselves with the hearing or Deaf worlds. Educators need to be prepared to address this issue and assist students in this stage. Knowledge of the previous stages and realization that those many not have been achieved gives insight into how a student may cope with this stage. Again, there are factors that affect the outcome of this stage. The educational setting is very influential. Students at a residential schools already have some exposure to Deaf culture, while students who are in public schools or mainstreamed may not have as strong an understanding of the Deaf culture. Most members of society are not faced with this decision which is inevitable for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Previous stages of development and how conflict was resolved in those stages also effect how this stage is handled. This especially is the case if adolescents are still struggling to resolve the conflicts from previous stages. Adolescents who do not have a strong sense of basic trust or self-worth struggle to associate with appropriate peers and define their own identity (Scheetz, 200 I). It is critical for educators to be aware of this stage and how all other stages can affect the resolution of stage five.

The next three stages in Erikson's theory of development are not directly related to the focus of this analysis. Although adolescents do not typically deal with these

stages, the chance that they will be able to deal with the conflict presented in later stages does rely on how previous stages have been resolved. Briefly, the sixth stage is "Intimacy versus Isolation". This stage is resolved when the individual is focused on others around him or her and what he or she gives to others in regards to work and love. Developing intimacy involves this need to feel he or she is contributing to society. This stage is not achieved when a person detaches themselves from others and society and puts him or herself into isolation. The seventh stage, "Generativity versus Stagnation", is an extension of Erikson's sixth stage. The general feeling here is to work to help society as a whole, focusing on establishing and guiding the next generation. This is an "outward" focus while stagnation would represent an "inward" focus. Someone who cannot resolve the conflict presented here becomes more self-centered and develops a specific routine. The final stage a person comes to is labeled, "Integrity versus Despair". Within this stage a person looks back and reviews his or her life. Someone who recognizes and focuses on the good in the previous stages can continue to live life based on that perception. A feeling of being content develops to meet integrity. On the other hand, if when a person reviews his or her life and realizes that various stages were not fulfilled, he or she has a feeling of despair and continues to live life based on that perception. Most likely this person is still struggling for resolution in the previous stages and tries to accomplish that (Scheetz, 2001).

Being acquainted with Erikson's theory of development helps us understand how children who are deaf or hard of hearing might develop socially. While there are many factors that play a role in how children move through the stages, those with hearing impairments do face a risk. Everyone who works with children who are deaf or hard of

hearing should be aware of these stages and the effect it can have on the social development of a child who is not able to solve a conflict or conflicts in the various stages. It is also important to be familiar with the stages because there may be some way to promote resolution in some of the stages or develop the positive feelings that have been achieved so that future stages can also be resolved. Analyzing each of the stages shows us that there are common threads that are present in the various stages that can be targeted exclusively for adolescents who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Throughout Erikson's eight stages, communication, exploration, and interaction play large roles in how children and adolescents resolve the conflict presented. These topics thus have a major influence on social development of adolescents who are deaf or hard of hearing. Social development is largely dependent upon communication (Scheetz, 2001). Marschark and Clark explain the "...crucial importance of communicative competence is for developing self-control, self-esteem, identification, and an understanding of one's environment (1998, p. 261)." These four qualities: self-control, self-esteem, identification, and understanding of one's environment, are all present in Erikson's theory of development. The fact that communication can have such an effect in all these areas is critical because children who are deaf or hard of hearing are at a high risk of poor and limited communication (Greenberg & Kusche, 1993). It is important to realize that students who are deaf or hard of hearing are not incapable of communicating but have limited communication because of the language barrier (Greenberg & Kusche, 1993). Students whose parents are deaf have an advantage because their development is more like that of a hearing child, but 90% of children with hearing impairments are born

to hearing parents (Marschark & Clark, 1993). Clearly, poor communication will have an effect on how a child who is deaf or hard of hearing develops socially.

Cognitive Development

Social development is clearly an area that needs to be addressed when teaching adolescent students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Another area of development that deserves notice is that of cognitive development. There are four theorists who have influential theories of cognitive development as it pertains to students who are deaf or hard of hearing. These four theorists are Piaget, Bruner, Feuerstein, and Vygotsky. All these theorists include ideas in their theories that are important in the cognitive development of adolescents who are deaf and hard of hearing. The following highlights each theorist's theory of cognitive development and how it pertains to children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development

One of the most influential theorists in cognitive development is Piaget. Piaget's theory of cognitive development focuses on how individuals understand and solve more difficult problems mentally as they move through four stages. These four stages are named sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operational. Progression through each of these stages is made possible by hereditary qualities and the environment. The role of environment is especially crucial for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. The environment offers opportunities for children to have numerous experiences in trying to understand the world they live in. Children are in a constant process to gain and regain equilibrium. Equilibrium is possible when knowledge has been understood and stored in the brain. Disturbances in equilibrium occur when an

experience offers new information that the child has not encountered before. The child then has to organize that new information in his or her schema in order to return to a state of equilibrium. Schema is the child's internal representation of the world in which concepts and actions are organized. There are two ways to sort new information. Both of these processes extend into adolescence and adulthood. One way is to assimilate the information into the schema. Assimilation is a process of taking the new information and fitting it the schema in an appropriate area that has already been set up. The other way of inputting information into the schema is to accommodate. Accommodation is necessary when the new information does not fit into a place that has been created already. Therefore, in order to accommodate, the child must create a new part of the schema where the information will be stored. By achieving either of these processes the child is able to return to a state of equilibrium until more new information is introduced (Scheetz, 2001). Using Piaget's theory of cognitive development, it is obvious how children who are deaf or hard of hearing may develop a lag in cognitive development. Based on Piaget's theory of cognitive development, it is evident that children who are deaf or hard of hearing have a great chance of developing problems in cognitive development. Because the environment plays such a major role in Piaget's theory of cognitive development, a child who is deaf or hard of hearing may have significant delays in cognitive development. Children who are deaf or hard of hearing have a decreased opportunity to interact with the environment. Incidental learning is important in this case because it is severely impacted by a hearing impairment. Hearing children are able to learn and understand the world around them merely by hearing what is happening all around them and making sense of it. Children with hearing impairments have decreased

access to incidental learning because they are not able to hear what hearing children can. This also relates to the sensorimotor stage of Piaget's cognitive development theory. The sensorimotor stage involves exploration of the world through the various senses. Acquiring information via the sense of sound is not as accessible to children who are deaf or hard of hearing as it is for hearing children. Another factor that decreases exposure to the environment in children who are deaf or hard of hearing is the parenting style. Parents who are overprotective of their deaf or hard of hearing child are more restrictive about experiences their child can have. Overprotecting their child can cause a lag in cognitive development. The last factor that effects how a child who is deaf or hard of hearing moves through Piaget's stages of cognitive development depends on the quality of language in and outside of the home. The more language a child has use of and can use, most importantly, to communicate with others, the better understanding of his or her world he or she can create. If parents cannot communicate with the child or the child is not able to express him or herself it is difficult for the child to ask questions and receive appropriate and useful answers. Outside the home, school may allow a child to use language more to explore, question, and clarify, but without meaningful interaction in the home a delay in cognitive development is still highly likely (Scheetz, 2001). Meadows states the, "...limits of one's language coincide with the limits of one's world (1980, p. 17)." This truly illustrates that how much language a child has directly relates to how much he or she can explore and understand his or her world. Without numerous opportunities to explore and interact with his or her world a child who is deaf or hard of hearing does not experience a sense of disequilibria. Through disequilibria, a child is capable of understanding and extending his or her knowledge in search of regaining

equilibrium. Understanding Piaget's theory of cognitive development is helpful in recognizing what children who are deaf or hard of hearing are commonly not exposed to and how teachers can alter that by promoting cognitive development in the classroom.

Bruner's View of Cognitive Development

Bruner is the second theorist whose theory of cognitive development is influential when applied to teaching students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Bruner's theory of cognitive development is mainly focused on language and how a child uses it to interact with the environment. Essentially, a child needs a language system that represents his or her world in order to, "...predict, extrapolate, or hypothesize ...(Scheetz, 2001)"

Development of cognition is possible by interacting with the environment and then expressing those action to others. This results in the passage through three stages. The first stage, the enactive stage, consists of all action and no words are yet present. The second stage, the iconic stage, is based on imagery by using senses not language. The third stage, the symbolic stage, emphasizes understanding through symbols. As adults, all stages can be used in different situations. Children, however, are involved in the process of developing the use of each stage and by interacting with others. Interaction for children who are deaf and hard of hearing may be problematic in that a communication barrier is often present. Even though children with hearing impairments have the ability to communicate, in many cases they do not know how or cannot put it to use. According to Bruner's theory of development, this communication barrier can hinder cognitive development as defined in his three stages because it makes them not readily accessible. Similar to Piaget and the following theorists, Bruner's theory of cognitive development

places a large role on communication and interaction with the environment, something that children who are deaf or hard of hearing are commonly deprived of

Feuerstein's Idea of Cognitive Development

Just as the previous theorists, Piaget and Bruner, Feuerstein incorporates growth through learning experiences in his view of cognitive development. The difference in Feuerstein's view is that an adult mediates specific learning experiences. This adult acts as a coach to guide appropriate learning. This view is interesting because it identifies the mediated learning experiences as pathways leading to future independence and autonomy in the learner as well as promoters of cognition and problem solving. Thus, this theory relates to both social and cognitive development. When applied to children who are deaf or hard of hearing, Feuerstein's view can be a useful tool to challenge thought in order to promote growth. In the case of children who are deaf or hard of hearing this is important because the opportunity to experience good communication that enables them to ask questions and receive good answers is definitely needed. Because of significant language delays in children who are deaf or hard of hearing, the opportunity for good communication and cognitive development of this type is often not experienced. Knowledge that this type of interaction promotes cognitive growth allows us to recognize why children who are deaf or hard of hearing may lag behind hearing peers in the area of cognition and provides insight into how teachers can foster cognitive development in students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Vygotsky's Philosophy of Cognitive Development

The last theorist whose work relates to cognitive development, is Vygotsky. Awareness of Vygotsky's philosophy of cognitive development is worthy of

understanding because it has useful principles. This view places the social environment as a means of developing cognition. In order for cognition to be fostered an adult needs to be present to work with a child. This adult provides scaffolding for the student in order for growth to occur. Scaffolding is made possible when the adult knows the child and where he or she is in terms of learning and can provide assistance for a task that the child is capable of only with help. Tasks that are the child can already complete alone or that are far beyond the level of the child are not tackled. Only tasks that the child is capable of with help are appropriate because eventually, with scaffolding, help from the adult, the child will learn to achieve the task alone. More complex tasks and levels of cognition can be reached this way. Again, because of decreased exposure to the environment coupled with different perceptions of the environment, children who are deaf or hard of hearing have different experiences and different development of cognition. Vygotsky identifies a unique way to help foster cognitive development and raise children's ability to a more complex level than would be capable without scaffolding (Scheetz, 2001).

In review, these four theorists have developed clear ideas of cognitive development in children. Each of these theories can be applied to children who are deaf or hard of hearing in order to supply various insights. Knowledge of these theories helps teachers to recognize lags in cognitive development that adolescent students with hearing impairments may have, as well as providing ideas as to how a teacher can encourage cognitive growth. Later, we will see how these various ideas are present in experiential education and how it can be useful in developing both cognition and social skills.

The Importance of Play

Recognizing that children who are deaf or hard of hearing have a likelihood of lagging behind deaf peers in social and cognitive development is the first step in developing a plan to implement in order to "catch up" our students. The thought of young children brings to mind toys, playing, and having fun. Taking a deeper look, it is obvious that play is also a means of learning for children. Understanding play allows us to use its essence in classrooms to promote learning. To do that, a definition of play needs to be addressed. The definition of play is more complicated than it seems. While a concrete definition of play is hard to find, establishing its characteristics can help to form an overall understanding. One main characteristic of play is that it involves enjoyment. Due to the enjoyment allowed in play it is capable of allowing people to achieve the mental state of flow. Flow is a mental state characterized by high concentration and lowered awareness of one's surroundings. The highest level of flow is known to occur when the type of play is at a moderate level for the player. For example, a beginner playing a game of tennis with a very advanced player will not have as much fun because the challenge is too difficult. This also occurs from the other perspective, an advanced player will most likely not enjoy the game because the difficulty of the challenge is too low. Optimally, players who are closer in ability make better competitors because the challenge is at a medial level for both. It is also at this level that flow is able to occur. Flow is related to another aspect of play. Play that most people see as fun and that is conducive to flow is played simply for the enjoyment of playing. The outcome of the play, most obviously, winning and losing, are not essential for play to be enjoyed. The point is that rewards, although commonly present, are results but not needed for play to take place. Play that does rely on the reward is still play but the difference is there are

more factors that affect the person and how he or she plays. When play takes place solely for the rewards, stress and pressure to succeed add a different element of play that takes away from the essence of enjoyment. This essence of enjoyment found in play makes play a good teaching tool because it is an activity in which students voluntarily choose to participate in.

Educational Aspects of Play

Play proves to be a great mode for learning because there are several aspects that can be involved. Through play individuals are challenged. When confronted with a challenge the individual has a chance to confront the challenge and grow from it or retreat from the challenge and remain unchanged. Those who do confront the challenge, "...grow in complexity by developing skills in response to challenges and learning to integrate different possibilities into their repertoire or action (Curtis & Russell, p. 74)." This complies with Piaget's theory of cognitive development in that with every experience the person finds new information and either assimilates or accommodates for what is learned from the experience. Thus, activities are patterned, voluntary investments of attention which can shape a person based on the activities he or she is involved in (Curtis & Russell, 1997). The shaping a person has undergone through various activities can be then observed when watching play. In children especially, we are able to notice their construction of the world. Varying areas and levels of development can be observed. First, play promotes cognitive development. Individuals learn to test things that are unfamiliar, manipulate reality, and master new tasks and move on (Chance, 1979). This is important for children who are deaf or hard of hearing because they have the opportunity to do these things and increase their cognition while having fun. Another

area of development that is targeted by play is social development. Through play, social skills, empathy, cooperation, group cohesion, and, most importantly, communication, are developed. The fact that play has such an affect on social development is critical in this analysis because this is an area we hope to further in students who are deaf or hard of hearing. The final area of development that is promoted by play is emotional development. While it is not the focus of this analysis, emotional development has ties to social development. Play has been noted to have an influence on the formation of self-concept. Because play involves manipulation of the environment plus interaction with others the individual is able to acquire feelings of self-worth and competence which are crucial concepts in Erikson's psychosocial theory of development (Scheetz, 2001; Chance, 1979). Play has numerous chances to assist in social and cognitive development in an enjoyable way.

Four Types of Play

In order to capitalize on the benefits of play, it is helpful to examine the four types of play and what characteristics are of each. One kind of play is called physical play. The main component of physical play is action. The second type of play is called manipulative play. This type allows the "player" to control and master the environment. It is mostly any example of stimulation to the mind. A third subcategory of play is symbolic play. Symbolic play involves the manipulation of *reality*. Three elements: objects, theme or plan, and roles are present as the "player" pretends, makes believe or fantasizes. The last type of play is games. Games consist of play governed by rules of conventions. These also require mutual involvement, shared activity, tum taking, and non-literality (Chance, 1979). After discussing these types, it is evident that each has its

own role in the development of a child. Incorporating all types of play to foster development, in this case social and cognitive development, in children who are deaf or hard of hearing is something to keep in mind.

Experiential Education

At this point, it is obvious that play is influential in the social and cognitive development of children, whether they are hearing, deaf, or hard of hearing. Unfortunately, teachers cannot simply allow their students to play all day hoping for maximum learning to occur. Similarly, adolescent students do not play in the same way that young children do. Nonetheless, the significant affects that play can induce are too valuable to overlook. One way to involve play in the classroom in order to foster social and cognitive development of adolescent students who are deaf or hard of hearing is to make use of experiential education. Quimby explains, "Experiential Education is founded on a belief that education must involve direct experience which requires problem solving, curiosity, and inquiry. It may be loosely defined as learning by doing. It is an active process rather than a vicarious one (1982, p. 1)." This definition contains various important parts. First, it emphasizes the use of "direct experience", and later describes this as "learning by doing." This is important because information learned has a higher chance of being remembered when the learner participates in the activity. Dale's cone shows that only 30 % of information is remembered when it is seen (Heinich, 2002). Direct and purposeful experiences in which the students are active are more influential. Providing a hands-on encounter should increase retention and later application of what is learned because 90% of what is said and done is remembered (Heinich, 2002). This definition also makes a distinction between an "active" process and a "vicarious" one.

This clearly shows again that experiential education believes that learning takes place when the learner takes part in his or her own learning instead of trying to learn through another individual's experiences. This idea of an active learner is strongly present throughout the entire definition. Quimby also points out that incorporation of a wilderness environment or overnight trips are not necessary for successful experiential education. He adds that teachers can receive training in various workshops (Quimby, 1982). Karl Rohnke describes adventure programming as a non-traditional way of "...teaching the basics of communication, cooperation, and trust in a milieu of FUN (1995, p. 3)." The use of non-traditional is important to note because experiential education is not founded on the idea that the teacher hold all the knowledge and passage of information from teacher to learner occurs through direct instruction, such a lecturing. Instead, he argues that all the answers are not given, and that students learn as they work together and develop individual understandings. Also, activities are spontaneous and unpredictable instead of well-planned and choreographed. Experiential education involves presenting a problem or task and allowing the students or learners to develop abilities as the activity progresses. The teacher's role is not to pass along all the information, but simply to pose a situation through which students can develop (Rohnke, 1995). Experiential education has a unique basis of learning that can be useful for students who are deaf or hard of hearing because it incorporates students as active learners.

Phases of A Teambuilding Experience

Teambuilding games are a type of experiential education that can be adapted and incorporated in an everyday classroom. The main tenets behind initiative games are:

action, reflection, and application (Fullerton, 1996). First, these games involve an action. These games present a problem that requires action to be solved, thus presenting students with a new experience. Even if one student has encountered the same game before, the experience will be different with a new group of people. Recalling that deaf and hard of hearing children often lag in social development due to restricted experiences, this is a crucial aspect. These provide experiences for students. Fullerton refers to initiative games as "positive cooperative experiences (1996, p. 52)." This description brings out specific characteristics of the action in an initiative game. The word positive shows that the experience is meant to be enriching to all participants. This directly relates to Erikson's psychosocial stages of development. Each member of the group plays an equal role in the group. The problem is such that it cannot be accomplished if all members are not participating or cooperating. Fullerton also uses 'cooperative' in his description. Developing a feeling of self-worth and self-esteem in all the members supports completion of Erikson's stages. Particularly, the stage of "Identity versus Role Diffusion" is targeted because students identify with the group and are made to feel as valued members of the group. This sense of community that is developed is then reinforced and carried over to the classroom in the later phases. In terms of Piaget's theory of cognitive development, presenting this new problem sends students into disequilibria. Until the group can work together and develop a solution, students cannot return to equilibrium. This expands the students' schema. It also has relation to social development because students are required to work together, help each other, and involve every team member. In order to develop a plan that will work everyone needs to be communicating in the group. If the idea is not shared with all, then they cannot work as an organized team.

Cooperation is essential in successful teambuilding. Responsibility in these cases is divided equally among the group. Looking back to Erikson's psychosocial stages of development, this adheres to the "Industry versus Inferiority" stage. Students can develop initiative by engaging in the task and wanting to reach a solution. The group is challenged to explore different options to solving the problem. Carrying out a proposed solution allows each group member to have an independent task that he or she has to accomplish to help the group achieve the overall task. Encouraging the idea that the group works together and if something goes wrong with one person the whole group takes responsibility, allows two important ideas to be conveyed to the members. First, that person does not feel an overwhelming amount of guilt if something goes wrong. Additionally, it promotes the feeling of being part of a group. This relates with the stage "Identity versus Role Diffusion". Adolescents are often struggling to find their identity in this stage. This setting allows students to feel comfortable and part of a group. Essentially they are able to identify with the group.

After the active part of the initiative game is experienced, the group needs to reflect on what took place. Reflection is the key element in the initiative game (Allison, 2000). Reflection involves both the teacher, or facilitator, and the students. Members of the group can develop a, "... living awareness of and a watchful thinking about all dimensions of the learning experience (Allison, 2000)." Viewing reflection this way, it is clear that reflection asks participants to assess the action that just occurred. Looking back, the group can recognize what took place, how they worked together, what ideas were tried, what did work, what could have been done differently, and how they felt throughout the activity. Often referred to as debriefing, reflection focuses on everything

that has taken place. The group facilitator plays a main role here because he or she needs to develop a worthwhile discussion. Communication is necessary in this stage. Giving permission to share will hopefully open many ideas to discussion. Learning about others can occur at this phase because members can share their experience and resolve problems or disagreements that others might not have realized.

The final aspect is the application of the experience to the real world. The ability to transfer information to various situations is what makes the game valuable. Problem solving itself is apparent in daily life so anything from an initiative game that can be applied in a real life situation makes experiential education an actual learning experience.

It is clear that initiative games are useful in classrooms of students who are deaf or hard of hearing. The three phases, action, reflection, and application, adhere to social and cognitive development as well as real world application through meaningful experiences. These are all critical in the education of students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Elements of A Successful Teambuilding Experience

The three phases above allow teambuilding to be useful in an educational setting. Allowing students to play active roles in their learning is present through all three stages. Active involvement has many benefits for students who are deaf or hard of hearing but there are also four key elements in an adventure experience that make encouraging development in students possible. Development is made possible when these four aspects are involved in the three phases of team building. All four aspects are directly tied to one another. To start, trust is necessary for a successful learning activity. Trust is important because it opens the door for exploration. Trusting and being comfortable to

act genuinely allows for an enriching experience. When the individuals involved trust the others the group is more capable of completing the task. Another key element is communication. Communication plays a large role because through communication participants are able to work together to anticipate and prevent problems, share, and learn from each other. In the case of students who are deaf or hard of hearing, communication is extremely important. Because communication is essential in these activities, students who are deaf or hard of hearing are required to communicate with each other.

Development of communication skills ties directly back to the previous discussion of social development. The role of communication as a key element of experiential education is significant because it is also a major area to target for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Like communication, the next element is also worthy of attention.

Cooperation is the next aspect of an adventure experience. Cooperation incorporates group cohesion, involvement of all members of the group, equal roles in the group, and individual development of what he or she can offer to the group. This relates closely to communication. Through communication this is made possible, and with cooperation the task is made possible. This, again, promotes development of social skills. The last main element is fun. Here, the importance of learning through play is evident. When group members are having fun they are more motivated to accomplish the task. Fun allows for an increase of attention as well as higher energy, known as flow, as discussed previously.

Overall, the quality of the product is higher when the task is fun. Rohnke points out, "...the fun component will be necessary if your Adventure Program is to succeed (1995, p. 12)." A successful program necessitates the four elements of trust, communication,

cooperation, and fun. Every one is needed, but an emphasis is put on the fun aspect of experiential education.

Five Sample Teambuilding Games

After making the various connections between social and cognitive development and play, plus identifying significant features of teambuilding, it is necessary to turn to some examples of games that can be used in a classroom. The following are five games listed with the various necessary elements for utilization in the classroom.

Stepping Stones

First, present the action to the students. Any context can be used, but as an example, "You are all being chased by a hairy monster. To save yourselves you need to get across this river of quicksand. You found these magical steps that can help you cross the quicksand. If you step on these or are touching them in the quicksand then you will not sink, but if you put it in the quicksand it will sink. You need to get as many people off the land before the monster catches up with you." Once this scenario has been established and all members understand their task, the teacher acts as a facilitator (Rohnke, 1995). Depending upon the needs of the students, the area that they have to cross can be long or short. This can be marked with tape or string on the floor. The "stepping stones" also need to be supplied. These should be large enough for two people to fit on, but not too large that it is not challenging. This activity will encourage the group to work together and communicate well before attempting to cross.

KeyPunch

Another activity to try is Key Punch. The teacher will need to make 8" circles and number them based on how many students are in the class. There should be a few

more than the number of students in the class. Create a large circle using tape on ground. Place the numbered circles randomly throughout the circle. Present the task to the students from a marked distance about 50 feet from the circle. This is the starting point. Explain, "The big circle over there is a machine. There are buttons with numbers on the machine. All of you need to work together to get the machine started as fast as you can. To get the machine to start you need to touch each of the buttons in order. It will not start if there is more than one person in the circle at a time. After you start the machine all of you have to run back here." Time the students as they make their first attempt to start the machine. After trying once, students can then develop alternate plans to try and start the machine faster than their previous attempts (Rohnke, 1995). This promotes teamwork also because the class should be able to start the machine faster by working together than alone. Communication is also necessary here because a plan needs to be organized and then followed through as with Stepping Stones.

Pairs

A different type of game is Pairs. While still effective, this game is a not like the previous games. This is instead a variation of tag. First, each person finds a partner. One of the partners is chosen to be the tagger first. The person being chased is given 5 seconds to get away from their tagger before the tagger can move. In this game no one is allowed to run, everyone must walk. After the 5 seconds, the tagger is allowed to start moving towards his or her partner. When the tagger tags his or her partner, the roles switch. The person who was tagged must spin in a circle and can then start chasing the tagger. The significance of this game is that one student is not singled out as in "normal"

tag. Additionally, because everyone is forced to walk, the game is fairer. This also allows for strategies to be developed.

Laps Sit

This is yet another type of game, the Lap Sit. Lap Sit requires members of the group to trust the others. An activity such as this can be useful in developing social skills because encouraging trust between the class can enable more acceptance of each other which can in turn, lead to practice with social skills. To play, all members of the group stand in a very tight circle one behind the other, like dominoes. When instructed, everyone sits on the knees of the person behind him or her. Everyone has to move uniformly and trust that they will not fall.

Everybody Up

Another game accessible to classroom use is Everybody Up. This game starts by dividing members into pairs. Each pair will sit back to back on the ground with arms interlocked at the elbows. The objective is for each pair to stand up together while connected. This is best achieved by working together to push against each other's backs. After this has been accomplished partners can switch around. When everyone has been successful at least once, it can be tried with groups of different numbers, 3, 4,5, and even with the whole group. This involves cooperation, working together, and compromise because of the demands of the activity.

These are five excellent games that can be used to promote social and cognitive development in various ways. The most influential component of each of these is fun. Without fun, the activity is not as effective. By eliciting students' participation in these games and encouraging fun, students are still able to learn.

Teambuilding as Play

The aspect of fun in teambuilding is clear when the relationship between play and teambuilding is examined. All four types of play are evident in various teambuilding situations. It is common that four types of play are present in one teambuilding game. For example, the game Stepping Stones, highlighted in the previous section, involves all four types of play. Imaginary play, the involvement of manipulation of reality, is present in the description of the task or problem. In addition to imaginary play, teambuilding is considered a game. In games, there is a challenge and a need to overcome it. In Key Punch, players are not competing against each other, but they are challenged by the clock. Even though an actual time is not given, the introduction subtly tells the players that the task needs to be completed as efficiently and quickly as possible. The third type of play that is evident is physical play. In Pairs this is especially obvious because each player is required to move around and actively participate. Without physical play in this situation the task would not be accomplished. Manipulative play is also present in teambuilding. The teambuilding task sets up the participants to control and manipulate their environment. Stepping Stones requires making arrangements within the environment in order to complete the task. It is obvious that all four types of play are present in teambuilding.

Overall, there are a variety of elements embedded within teambuilding that are target areas of social and cognitive development. Teambuilding accomplishes exactly what it is named to do. It is supposed to develop the sense of team within a group of students. By developing this team, students can grow both socially and cognitively. In relation to Erikson's Psychosocial theory of social development, acceptance from others

and the opportunity to develop and increase self-esteem is crucial for social development. These are targeted in two main ways by teambuilding games. Throughout the game the students will be working together to achieve a common goal. When the goal is reached, each individual feels pride in their ability to accomplish such a task as well as pride in feeling a part of a group. Both of these are critical in the Psychosocial theory. Additionally, reflection upon the activity encourages communication and understanding of others, which can then be applied to real life situations. Cognitive skills are also developed through teambuilding. Mainly, students are presented a task and asked to do what is asked. This is essentially problem-solving in which the students are actively involved. Problem-solving is in itself a developer of cognitive skills because students are required to assess the problem, develop plans for its solution, try the plan, improve the plan and ultimately, solve the problem. Teambuilding is exceptional because it takes the usefulness of teaching problem-solving and makes it more effective by including students in a group with which the process can be worked through together. It adds an extra challenge. Most importantly, these are all targeted *while having fun*. This is the key factor in teambuilding, that so much can be accomplished, and yet students are still having fun. These elements are important to teachers because it can help them develop the social and cognitive skills of students in a unique way.

Appealing to Teachers

Besides all the aforementioned, favorable reasons within teambuilding games that make them appealing for use in the education of students who are deaf or hard of hearing, teambuilding also complies with essential competencies that teachers must exhibit. Based on a survey of nationwide service providers, a list of ten essential competencies for

teachers was created. Among these top ten are five major abilities that can be addressed by incorporating initiative games in the classroom. One characteristic teachers are expected to have is that ability to modify methods and material for students with special needs. Using initiative games is one way to demonstrate this ability because games need to be adapted for different groups of students. Another quality is creating a positive learning environment of individuals with special needs. Creating this positive environment is supported by the development of a sense of community and group cohesion promoted in initiative games. A third skill that teachers should possess is the teaching the use of thinking, problem solving, and other cognitive strategies to meet individual learning needs. Initiative games foster thinking, problem solving, and cognitive development as a whole in a way that allows students to create their own strategies, making them more meaningful to the individual. Learning in a way that motivates students and encourages them to develop meaningful experiences and connections complies with another essential competency. This one states that students should be given opportunities to develop concepts through participation in meaningful and motivating real life experiences (Luckner, 2001). The incorporation of the application phase focuses on developing a means for the transfer of knowledge and skills to real life situations. Also, 90% of experiences that involve direct participation are generally remembered (Heinich, 2002). This is closely related to the next characteristic that was mentioned earlier. This states that opportunities should also be made possible for the learner to explore and experience common objects that hearing students learn incidentally (Luckner, 2001). This refers to presenting experiences that will allow students who are deaf or hard of hearing to develop and expand their schema. This

correlates with Bruner's theory of cognitive development that emphasizes interaction with the environment. In addition to that, initiative games involve group members who can assist in cognitive development, as is supposed in Feuerstein's theory. These are five out of ten core competencies that are expected of a teacher that relate to and are present in initiative games.

In conjunction with the ten essential competencies, there are also needs specific to secondary educators who would be teaching adolescents with hearing impairments. These include the need to teach daily living skills, decision making, problem solving, and critical thinking skills, and social skills (Luckner, 1992). These are crucial for the education of secondary, adolescent students and are all targeted addressed in initiative games. Based on the various expectations of teachers to develop these numerous skills and provide such enriching opportunities, it is clear that experiential education can work with the curriculum and other teaching strategies as a wonderful supplement for teaching students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Conclusion

In review, there is great evidence that teachers need to develop some program to implement which targets the social and cognitive development of adolescent students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Applying the various theories presented by Erikson, Piaget, Bruner, Feuerstein, and Vygotsky, gives us a perspective from which we can view the various lags that may be present in students with hearing impairments. This paper presents the use of experiential education, particularly teambuilding games, in teaching students with hearing impairments in order to help improve and develop social and cognitive skills. An analysis of teambuilding and its elements as they relate to play,

which is influential in students' lives, allowed us to recognize why teambuilding games can be influential in the deaf and hard of hearing classroom. After learning more about this use of teambuilding in the classroom, it is evident that if implemented, teambuilding games can assist in the social and cognitive development of adolescent students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

In order to best implement these ideas in a classroom setting, a teacher needs to build his or her collection of various teambuilding activities. This collection and practice with providing a constructive teambuilding experience with students who are deaf and hard of hearing will allow a teacher to help foster social and cognitive skills within students. As a teacher works to create a plan that compliments his or her curriculum and schedule, he or she also builds a structure for educational objectives to be met. These are all important in constructing a blueprint for success in every classroom.

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A BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS:

Constructing social and cognitive development
of deaf and hard of hearing adolescent students using
team building games in the classroom

A Workshop

Presented By Jennifer M. Jones

Wednesday, December 12, 2001

Workshop Agenda

- ~ Icebreaker
- ~ Presentation
- ~ Teambuilding Games
- ~ Group Discussion
- ~ Share and Discuss
- ~ Reflection
- ~ Closure

A Blueprint for Success

Constructing social and cognitive development of deaf and hard of hearing adolescent students using teambuilding games in the classroom

Jennifer M. Jones, University Honors capstone

Welcome and Overview

- Icebreaker
- + Presentation
- + Teambuilding games
- . Group Discussion
- . Share and Discuss
- + Reflection

What We Know:



Experiential Education

- + Teambuilding
- + Direct experience
- + Requires problem solving, curiosity, and inquiry
- + Active process
- + Non-traditional
- + Teaches communication, cooperation, and trust
- + Spontaneous
- + Unpredictable

Phases of Teambuilding

- + Action
- + Reflection
- + Application

Elements of Teambuilding

- + Students as active learners
- . Feeling of trust
- . Good communication
- + Group cooperation

Characteristics of Play

- ## Learning through Play
- +Confront a challenge to grow
 - +Test things
 - + Manipulate reality
 - Master new tasks
 - + Cooperation
 - + Empathy
 - +Group cohesion
 - + Communication

Four Types of Play

Physical play! (Involves action)

Imaginative play (Manipulates reality)

Games (Governed by rules and conventions)

- ## Play in Teambuilding
- Includes all 4 types of play
 - +Challenges participants
 - +Provides opportunities
 - +More focused objective than play
 - +Has underlying goals

- ## Teambuilding in Deaf Education
- .TwoAreas:
- Social Development
 - Cognitive Development

- ## Social Development
- .Erikson's psychosocial theory
- Eight stages
 - Overcome a conflict in each stage
 - All involve communication, exploration, and interaction

Social Development

- Implication for students who are deaf or hard of hearing
 - High risk of poor and limited communication
 - Language barriers
 - Less incidental hearing
 - Restricted experiences

Cognitive Development

- *Piaget
 - Theory of cognitive development
 - Four stages
 - Sensorimotor
 - Preoperational
 - Concrete operational
 - Formal operational
 - Equilibrium/Disequilibria
 - Assimilation and accommodation into schema

Cognitive Development

- +Bruner
 - View of cognitive development
 - Using language to interact with environment
 - Three stages
 - Enactive stage
 - Iconic stage
 - Symbolic stage

Cognitive Development

- .Feuerstein
 - Growth through learning experiences
 - Adult mediates learning
 - Communication
 - Good questions and answers

Cognitive Development

- +Vygotsky
 - Scaffolding when interacting with environment
 - Zone of Proximal Development -----

Level that child cannot accomplish alone

Level where child is successful with help

Level where child is capable alone

Teambuilding Games

Group Discussion

Reflection

.What did you learn from this workshop?

+How is the information you learned useful to you?

.Name one interesting new fact that you learned.

Overview

+What we knew

+What teambuilding is

- Teambuilding and social development
 - Teambuilding and cognitive development
 - Teambuilding games
- .Group discussion
- Reflection

Thank You!



Teambuilding Games

Assess each of the following teambuilding games:

- Is this appropriate for students who are deaf or hard of hearing?
- If yes explain why, if no describe what adaptations you would make.
- What skills does this activity practice and develop?

1. HUMAN KNOT: The group forms a circle. All members reach out hands to find another member of the circle. No one can be holding a hand of the person next to him or her and each person must be holding two hands of different people. The challenge is to unravel the hands and arms so the end result is a circle again. Remind people they cannot detach hands and they must work together.

2. TELEPHONE: The participants are all in a circle or a line. One person starts the activity by whispering a phrase into the ear of the person next to him or her. If a person does not hear the message, he or she can say "Operator" to have the message repeated only one time. The message travels around to the other end of the group and then the last person shares the final message.

Workshop Evaluation

12-13-01

After presenting my workshop I found it to be very close to what I expected. I was very excited to be able to present the research that I had found. The nature of the research and paper I completed during this capstone experience lends itself to a workshop. Teambuilding involves direct experience and active learning so it was easy to present the information and also let the participants experience teambuilding. I also asked the attendants to evaluate and adapt some example teambuilding games for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. This allowed them to learn about the concept and also about what to do if they planned on implementing teambuilding games in an educational setting for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. I received positive feedback from the reflection. Based on the reflections that the people submitted, I can tell that they found the information insightful and useful and enjoyed the experience. I would definitely present this again.

If I were to present this workshop again, I would make some changes. First, I would use a different icebreaker that would introduce everyone to each other. I think this would have been helpful. Next, I would develop more ways for the audience to interact with the material. I am not sure how clear I was at explaining teambuilding games until we actually played some sample games. This needs to be clearer at the beginning of the presentation. I would also develop some way for the audience to be involved after the discussion of social development and after cognitive development. I think by doing this the material would be more accessible and easily remembered by the audience. Another change I would make would be to present teambuilding games that would simulate how a

deaf or hard of hearing person might participate in the activity. Essentially, the members would experience the games that they would be asked to adapt later. Doing this would lengthen the workshop so it would depend on how much time was allotted. These are all changes that could be made to make the workshop more effective, but I think overall it went very well as it was.