



Start

Involvement

A Time-Management Training Game for Student Volunteers.

BEFORE YOU ORGANIZE AND CONDUCT your own "involvement" game, you might want to look at other games and game literature in order to gain additional insight into the possibilities and limitations of the device.

Over the past three decades, simulation games have gained prominence as planning, teaching, and analysis tools. Before World War II, the use of gamed simulations was virtually limited to military tactics and strategy sessions.

In the last few years, the art or science of simulation gaming has grown immensely, and like many developing disciplines, makes expansive claims.

But the user must understand that the games only represent reality; they only attempt to "model" human behavior and real life. A conclusion based on game experiences still has to be tested in actual situations. Games are, despite their value as aids in analyzing and understanding the complexities of real life, only complementary to other learning, research, and planning tools.

Before you play "involvement," read some of the literature on games and apply its principles where they seem appropriate. Publications that describe the use of game design concepts, rather than those that speculate a great deal, will be particularly useful to the novice. Participation in games run by more experienced leaders will also help. Try to sample various game styles and games aimed at differing goals. Discuss experiences, leadership styles and game types with other leaders.

"Involvement" can be conducted without prior experience. But prepare yourself thoroughly and devote time and meticulous care to the structure and materials of the game. Read over this article a couple of times and think through your goals. Then modify the game in order to meet those goals. After that, make a dry run. Test the mechanisms that participants will use. Make sure that you have time to handle all of your functions as game director. Decide how you might delegate responsibilities. Look over the physical setup you will be using and make clear, concise signs that accurately describe game stations, rules, and procedures. Planning pays dividends. Most important, enjoy yourself and make sure that everyone else does.

NSVP and the author would like to hear from users of "Involvement." The game will benefit from a sharing of experiences.



**PICK
ROLE
CARD**

**LOSE
INHIBITIONS
HERE**



**PICK UP
1 VOLUNTEEREE**

Dorm



**Take One
Bookee
... Study
for one hour**

**Go directly
to Day Care
Center ...
do not pass
SLEEPEE**

**Health
Center**



SYNERGIST

Exchange Center



Ask permission to exchange

You need another sleepee



Go back to Nursing Home... Try again!!!

Nursing Home

Move ahead 4 spaces

TRADE BOOKEE

Welfare Agency



TRY ANOTHER INTERACTION

Day Care Center



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"INVOLVEMENT" IS A MIXER aimed at giving volunteers and volunteer coordinators a sense of the time management situations they are likely to confront in an actual volunteer experience.

In real life, students, coordinators, professors, and agency administrators make time trade-offs to fulfill professional, academic, and personal commitments. "Involvement" simulates these interactions in a structured but socially informal setting.

The Setting

The setting of the game should create a sense of removal from the players' normal environment, help reduce inhibitions, and encourage participation. The game should be stylized as much as possible, allowing players to identify with their roles quickly and easily.

Even the terms used in the game should contribute to its light-hearted detachment from routine, its clear connections with real situations, and its immediate identification with elements that actually interact in student volunteer programs.

Physically, "Involvement" requires:

- A large, preferably empty space allowing plenty of elbow room.
- Signs or marked partitions designating an EXCHANGE AREA and assorted other stations, such as VOLUNTEER COORDINATING OFFICE, DORMITORY, HEALTH CENTER, WELFARE AGENCY, DAY CARE CENTER, NURSING HOME, and SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT. These stand for the various elements of a hypothetical volunteer program.
- A variety of props, such as name tags, colored chips, placards, hats, felt-tip markers, envelopes or plastic bags, 5 x 7 file cards, string, a fishbowl, and a target shoot game; perhaps a dart board, ring-toss, bean bag throw, or paper cup penny-pitch.

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Pick up one WORKEE
Take 10 minute break

Give back 2 Freebees

Back up 4 spaces



The Roles

Players begin by drawing tags from a fishbowl, wastebasket, or similar receptacle. Each tag carries a role title and directs the player who draws it to go to a station where he finds a packet corresponding to his role title. Each packet contains a role description and the materials that the player will use during the game. The card carries a description of role behavior, job, professional and personal needs, and starting and target profiles.

A starting profile expresses a player's current time allotment in numerical units; so much time for study, work, leisure, sleep, and volunteer commitment. The card also instructs the player to make necessary time-unit exchanges to accomplish certain goals within the bounds of a 12-hour schedule. The game proceeds by player interaction (or mixing), exchanging time-units in a variety of circumstances.

Specifically, each player is allotted the following units of time expressed by colored plastic chips:

- Workee:** Time used by employment.
- Bookee:** Time needed for study.
- Sleepee:** Time needed for rest.
- Freebee:** Time for leisure.
- Volunteeree:** Time needed for volunteer commitment.

Minimal costuming is encouraged to help players identify with the roles they assume. A "student" could don a beanie or carry a school pennant; a "professor" could wear a mortar-board or a pair of horn rimmed glasses, a "coordinator" could carry a brief case, an "agency director" can wear a tie or hat.

Interaction

Player A draws the role of a student. Player B draws

the role of a professor of Asian Studies. The student's role card shows him majoring in social work. He is a sophomore and must work hard for his grades. He needs study time but would be willing to volunteer if he could get credit for it. To obtain credit, he needs to locate a professor who can supervise his volunteer work. The student would also like more free time to be with his girl. The starting profile reflects the student's current time allotment:

- 2 workees**
- 4 bookees**
- 3 sleepees**
- 3 freebees**
- 0 volunteerees**

The target card instructs the student to add one unit of study time (a bookee) and one unit of time (a volunteeree) for a volunteer commitment. Since all time units must add up to 12, the student plans to give up a work unit (one workee) and one unit of free time (a freebee) to balance his target profile.

The professor encourages students to give community service, something he would like to do himself, in his free time. His starting profile is:

- 5 workees**
- 1 bookee**
- 4 sleepees**
- 1 freebee**
- 0 volunteerees**

Wishing to ease his work load, the professor needs to get a paper published in order to release two workees. With a reduced work load he could devote more time to his interest in volunteer projects. He would, in fact, be able to supervise the student.

SAMPLE ROLE CARD

Professor

You are a professor of social work; young, attractive, dynamic, and popular with your students.

You feel that it would be appropriate for your students to involve themselves in community service. You intend to initiate a program of community service, devoting one volunteeree to its supervision.

You need four sleepees. If you do not obtain the correct amount of sleep, you must spend ten minutes of game time in the university health center.

Teaching and advising students absorbs four workees.

You spend one freebee socializing.

You need two bookees to research an article that you must publish in order to maintain your faculty status. If you can convince the game director to accept the article for a professional journal you can use one workee for student-community involvement.

		<u>Starting Profile</u>		
Workees	Bookees	Sleepees	Freebees	Volunteerees
5	2	4	1	0
Workees	Bookees	Sleepees	Freebees	Volunteerees
4	2	4	1	1

Student and professor seek each other out, go to the EXCHANGE AREA, and make a deal involving time units. This is how "Involvement" works as a mixer.

The Exchange

Once an agreement is made, units of time are exchanged, subject to the game director's approval and the laws of chance. Freebees and volunteers can be exchanged at will. All other exchanges of time units involve the following six options or consequences determined by the game director or the target-shoot in the EXCHANGE AREA.

The target-shoot form may vary. Players can shoot dice, pitch pennies into labeled cups or toss a bean bag over a partition onto a target area. Target area labels may include such items as:

- No problem. Exchange units.
- Problem. Do not exchange units, try another interaction.
- Situation altered. Take another of the same unit. For example, a player trying to release a workee may find his job situation altered, requiring him to obtain a workee.
- Risk. A player must turn over one of a pack of "risk" cards. The game designer makes these up beforehand, using file cards and markers. A card may express "no consequence." "You are fired," "you are ill, retire from the game for five minutes," "you have received a failing gradee add two bookees . . . etc."
- Get permission. Player must consult appropriate authority, either the game director or the head of an agency, department, or station. A player wishing to

release a sleepee, for example, must consult a "doctor" at the "health center." The doctor may declare him "ill," and the player then must wear a placard for five minutes declaring "I AM ILL."

If the student and professor are successful in exchanging time units to consummate their agreement, both target profiles are fulfilled. Players who have fulfilled goals may take on another role and repeat the process.

The Game Leader

The game leader serves as a "court of last resort," gives advice, and sets the tone of the proceedings. He briefs participants on the rules and the methods of play and points out the facilities in the room.

Feedback

After the game, allow 30 minutes to discuss how the interactions:

- Approximated the reality experienced by the players in their life situations
- May lead to redesign of the game
- Relate to the problems of program management.

The game is essentially a mixer in the early or introductory stage of new volunteer staffing. "Involvement" can be used to bring people together at a coordinators' seminar, or as a refresher and mixer for experienced volunteers meeting again for another school year.

A Brief Scenario

The game director sounds a bell, honks a horn, blows a whistle, or shoots off a cannon to begin play. One player draws the role of a "day care supervisor" who needs a

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SAMPLE ROLE CARD

Student

You are a student majoring in social work and must work hard for your grades. You need study time but would be willing to volunteer if you could get credit for it. To obtain credit, you need to locate a professor who'll supervise your work. You'll need to add a bookee and a volunteeree while giving up a workee and a freebee. Since a freebee and a volunteeree can be exchanged at will, there is no problem in gaining time needed for the volunteer commitment. You'll need to consult your employer in order to relinquish your workee.

		<u>Starting Profile</u>		
Workees	Bookees	Sleepees	Freebees	Volunteerees
2	4	3	3	0
		<u>Target Profile</u>		
Workees	Bookees	Sleepees	Freebees	Volunteerees
1	3	3	2	1

co-worker to help him supervise 150 children. After consulting with the game director, he "advertises" for a qualified person by posting the job on the game bulletin board. Another student wanting to give up a bookee must submit a proposal (which can be highly perfunctory) to the game director.

Meanwhile, in the student union area, a volunteer coordinator needs to find two volunteers to fulfill her target profile. Failure to do that may result in a loss of funding for her project in the following year.

A student in the dorm area wants a service-learning course for graduation and must satisfy the game director that he's chosen the right project.

A graduate student with four workees canvasses the agencies in the room, including a nursing home separated from the rest by a maze of chairs and tables to simulate distance. She is trying to find the right job. She may find the "day care supervisor." She may read the job bulletin board. She may not. But she must seek the right job.

All of these players interact, discuss their qualifications, make agreements, form volunteer projects, form community service commitments, and take all the risks of time trade-offs.

Some over-extend themselves, lose sleep and become ill, spend too much leisure time, or find themselves burdened with too much school work and risk low grades. Others manage to find scheduling balances in their target profiles and achieve the self-satisfaction of meeting and mastering goal objectives. "Involvement" is a life simulation game; people meeting and dealing with others.

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SAMPLE ROLE CARD

Student Coordinator

You are a junior majoring in philosophy. Your grades permit you to devote two, rather than three bookees a week to your studies. You must arrange with your professor or a department head to drop one bookee.

You pay for your dorm room and tuition by tutoring college students. But rising prices make it necessary for you to expend two workees instead of one at your part-time job. You must arrange with the university's placement counselor for the additional workee.

You need five sleepees because of a recent bout with mononucleosis. This cannot be reduced or you will be forced to spend time (five minutes' game time) in the university health center.

Your social life occupies one freebee a week. If this amount of time is decreased, you will become a recluse in the dormitory (for 10 minutes game time).

You used to expend two volunteers coordinating a drug education program, but your recent illness means that you must drop down to one volunteer and find an assistant student coordinator to take over one.

		<u>Starting Profile</u>		
Workees	Bookees	Sleepees	Freebees	Volunteers
1	3	4	1	2
		<u>Target Profile</u>		
Workees	Bookees	Sleepees	Freebees	Volunteers
2	2	5	1	1