

VALUES

TITLE: Strategic Chair Taking

AGE GROUP: 9-11

GROUP SIZE: 12-25 (the more the better)

DURATION: 45 min with debriefing

LEARNING OUTCOME: Enable learners to develop appropriate values, habits and attitudes when handling money.

KEY CONCEPTS: Attention to details, patience, discipline, following the rules, as well as learning about themselves as a team.

MATERIALS NEEDED: a standard size classroom chairs of the classroom, a timer

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

Preparation of the room

Remove all tables from the playing space. Use the number of chairs, which equals the number of playing pupils plus the person playing the “Robot”.

Spread the chairs around the room in a random arrangement, but have enough space in between all chairs that a person can comfortably pass without touching the chair and the one sitting on it. Chairs can face or not face each other. The less orderly it is, the better it gets.

Have one person play the “Robot”.

Have all participants, who are not “Robot”, sit down on a chair - the one at the end of the room shall be left unused (for the Robot). In case there are two people facilitating, one of them shall be the Robot.

The game

- The goal of the game is not to prevent the “Robot” to sit down for as long as possible. The timing person will measure the time.
- The Robot is always moving with a standard, linear movement to the closest empty chair. The Robot starts from the opposite end of the room, from where the its empty chair.
- She or he cannot be prevented by force or physical cohesion to sit down, only by having someone sit on the specific chair s/he aims at sitting down. But at that case the chair of the person standing up will become unoccupied, so the Robot can take that one.
- All participants sit on their chairs. Whenever they leave their chairs, or even just start to stand up, they are not allowed to sit back to the same chair - the need to look for a new empty one.
- The Robot always starts when the group decides they are ready, and the facilitator says “Start”, and at the same moment starts timing. The round ends, when the Robot sits down on an empty chair.
- Between rounds there is time for the participants to come up with a common strategy. It can also be timed (e.g. you have 5 minutes), or let loose.
- There can be as many rounds as the participants want. The facilitator shall ask after each round: “Are you happy with this result?” There should be at least 4 rounds to have comparison between group strategies, and to have the patience and attention skills to strengthen.

Debriefing

There shall be two rounds of debriefing.

If there are a lot of participants (above 15), it is not required for everyone to talk. The first round of debriefing is about personal experience. Encourage discussion with the following questions:

*How have you felt?, What was hard for you? What did you enjoy?,
What do you think has worked? What problems have all of you faced?*

Usually at this time all participants are still very much overwhelmed by the game experience, that is why it is important to reflect on personal level.

The second round of debriefing is about generalizing. Let students discuss the topic with following questions:

When do you meet similar kind of situations in your life (or in your group)? How do you usually react?, Do you think there are similarities of your group reaction to the one experienced here?, What?, What do you think we have learned from this game?

Notes:

Usually people of all age groups love this game. The more they enjoy, the longer the game time gets, as they try to get a better result. The better results start at least at 1.5 minutes. Usually at the first round the Robot can sit down within 20 seconds, as participants jump up, and leave their chairs empty. Very good cooperative groups can keep it up for 3-4 minutes as well. Naturally timing is also group-related - smaller and also very large groups tend to lose it quicker.

It is important spring up the competition feeling, so the facilitator is allowed to tell the group about previous results. The facilitator has to be strict in keeping the rules - not touching or inhibiting physically the Robot, and not sitting back on one's chair after standing up. All participants are required to take special care not to hurt each other and themselves. If any accident happens, stop the game. This simulation game is also great for showing the basic dynamic of the group itself: who are the opinion leaders, who are the followers, who are resisting or passive, and their typical interactions.