Operation Miasma Plasma

ACTIVITY: ‘OPERATION MIASMA PLASMA’
TIME: 15+ minutes
SIZE: Large groups/whole of class
SPACE: Clear room, sports hall, outdoors
RESOURCES: Wild Cards (p.81 or SenseAbility CD), bucket, small sports mats, markers such as witches hats or skittles

The aim is to place students in a pressured situation fraught with challenge where they must overcome frustrations and make decisions.

The result should be class discussion about emotion regulation, choices, and consequences.

NB: This activity is very similar to ‘Proximity’ p.85.

1. Have every student take a Wild Card from the bucket. They can read it (taking note of the symbol on their card) but must put it in their pocket without sharing its contents with anyone else.

2. Break the class into equally sized teams of six to nine students.

3. Choose sports mats of a size that will barely take that number of students if they squish ‘aboard’, allowing two mats per team.

4. For each group allow enough skittles, witches hats, balls, etc., for each team to be able to collect four items (i.e. for four teams you will need 16 items). Scatter these across the playing area. Delineate a safe ‘start zone’ at one end and a safe ‘finish zone’ at the far end.

5. The scenario: the playing area between the safe zones is a sludge pool of toxic waste. Each team must use their mats as rafts to cross the sludge pool to the far side without falling in (i.e. touching the floor). The teams must alternate mats, dragging the spare with them and using them as stepping stones as they navigate the sludge. If one team member falls in, that player must retire from the game and their team must start again. Also, each team must collect four ‘keys’ (witches hats, skittles, etc.) that will allow them to activate a transporter beam on the far side that will take them to safety. You can add pressure by running teams against each other and/or against the clock.

6. Commence the game.

7. At your discretion, have players pull out and obey their Wild Card instructions (e.g. ‘You must stand on one leg for one minute’). The Wild Cards are marked with three different symbols (circles, squares, triangles), so you can get different students to obey Wild Card instructions at various points at the activity by saying, for instance, ‘Students with Triangle Wild Cards, obey them now’.

8. The first team to get its four keys to the transporter beam in the finish zone wins.

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

• What was the hardest part of the activity? What was the easiest? Did you feel in control? Why/why not?

• What did you think and feel when you read your Wild Card? How did you react? In retrospect, were your thoughts helpful/constructive, or not? Why?

• What strategies did the winning team utilise? What choices did they make? What thinking strategies (including encouraging one another) did they use?

• Reflect that this is like the A-B-C-D Model, and everyone was responding to the same event (i.e. they had the same goal) and very similar challenges, but different people thought and felt about it in different ways.

• How is this activity similar to real life situations? What could the sludge represent? What could the keys represent? What could the Wild Cards represent? Would your reactions in this activity serve you well in these real life situations? Why/why not?

• Did you receive good help from your teammates? Who can you look to for help in everyday life?