



ACTIVITY: 'OPERATION MIASMA PLASMA'

TIME: 15+ minutes
SIZE: Large groups/whole of class
SPACE: Clear room, sports hall, outdoors
RESOURCES: Wild Cards (p.88 or SenseAbility CD), bucket, small sports mats, witches hats or markers, skittles, etc.

The aim is to place students in a pressured situation fraught with challenge where they can choose to become stressed or to treat the situation lightly.

The result should be class discussion about emotional regulation, lightening up, and helpful self-talk.

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 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 four skittles, witches hats, balls, etc, and 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). 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. The teams must alternate mats, dragging the spare with them and using them as stepping-stones as they navigate the sludge. 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. must stand on one leg for one minute). The Wild Cards are marked with three different symbols (circles, squares, triangles), so you can get students to obey their Wild Card instructions at different points at the game 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 wins.



DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

- What strategies did the successful team/s employ? Did they have a laugh or did they treat the activity seriously?
- Did laughter help or hinder the activity? Did it help bind the group as a team?
- Which team enjoyed the activity most (use applause to evaluate)? How seriously did they treat the activity?
- What did you think and feel when you read your Wild Card? How did you react? In retrospect, were your thoughts helpful or constructive, or not? Why/why not?
- Reflect that this is like the A-B-C-D Model, and everyone was responding to the same event (i.e. had the same goal) and very similar challenges, but different people thought and felt about it in different ways.
- How is this activity analogous to real life situations? What would the sludge represent? What would the keys represent? What would the Wild Cards represent? How would a strong Sense of Humour assist you in situations like that?
- Did you receive good help from your teammates? Did their Senses of Humour affect your own? In what ways?