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2. “Kick the Bucket!” – An activity for enhancing leadership and learning
3. Practice Paper
4. Presenters will share an easy-to-use activity for engaging participants in leadership theory and concepts. “Kick the Bucket!” offers application in a variety of settings. This session will highlight its use in college level leadership courses.
5. Yes, please consider this proposal for a poster, in the event it is not accepted as a paper presentation.
6. Sarah Jo Helms is an undergraduate student pursuing a degree in Agriculture Sciences. She plans to continue her education by completing a master’s degree in Agriculture Leadership where she hopes to continue doing research and developing innovative leadership tools for all ages.

Eric K. Kaufman is an assistant professor in the department of Agricultural and Extension Education at Virginia Polytechnic and State University. Dr. Kaufman earned his PhD from the University of Florida in 2007. His areas of interest include collegiate leadership development and professional development for volunteer leaders.

7. Yes, if accepted, please print the manuscript in ALE conference proceedings.

Introduction

“Kick the Bucket!” was designed by an undergraduate student as a way of reviewing the concepts learned in an interpersonal leadership class. The main theme of the game is centered on Clifton’s “Dipper and the Bucket Theory.” The activity can be adapted in a wide variety of ways. As originally used, the activity served as a tool to help participants discuss the material covered in class as well as a fun way to interact with others. The objectives were as follows:

- 1) Review previous material,
- 2) Promote teamwork and comradery and,
- 3) Reinforce the value of learning games.

Background

According to Rath and Clifton (2005), the Dipper and The Bucket Theory gives us five strategies for increasing positive emotions:

- 1) Prevent Bucket Dipping
- 2) Shine a Light on What is Right
- 3) Make Best Friends
- 4) Give Unexpectedly
- 5) Reverse the Golden Rule

The Theory of the Dipper and the Bucket states that:

“Each of us has an invisible bucket. It is constantly emptied or filled, depending on what others say or do to us. When our bucket is full, we feel great. When it’s empty, we feel awful. Each of us also has an invisible dipper. When we use that dipper to fill other people’s buckets – by saying or doing things to increase their positive emotions – we also fill our own bucket. But when we use that dipper to dip from others’ buckets – by saying or doing things that decrease their positive emotions – we diminish ourselves.” (Rath & Clifton, 2005, p. 15)

According to Driscoll (2002), educators should be aware of four broad learning principals:

- 1) Learning occurs in context
- 2) Learning is active
- 3) Learning is social
- 4) Learning is reflective

“Kick the Bucket!” is a tool that exemplifies all four principals and allows participants to place leadership skills, ideas and theories into their long term memory. Christopher and Smith (1987) have suggested that learning is “about power, people, and problem-solving” (p. 2). This same structure in games “is why they can be constructed as such effective learning tools” (p. 2). Games are an effective learning tool because “games are known territory; their parameters are set. They have roles and rules, beginnings, endings, and limited consequences. They are comfortable learning grounds and good to have in training programs...” (p. 1). These same dynamics create an effective environment for accomplishing most leadership training goals.

Description of the Practice

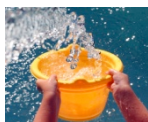
1) **Setup** – The board used was setup to cover topics discussed a particular class. In order to make it adaptable, the instructor can introduce topics either all at once as an overall review or periodically as each subject is covered in class. There are three sets of cards that were originally developed. *Question* cards were knowledge-based questions, *Obstacle/Goal* cards offered game instructions related to the Dipper and the Bucket Theory, and *Hieroglyphic/Clue* cards required students to conceptualize leadership theory or subjects through creative representation. The instructor is free to use her/his own cards or to have students submit questions themselves.

2) **Beginning the Game** –

- Each player will receive a bucket and 150 drops (or chips with each chip representing 10 drops) and a bucket. Drops are the currency of the game. All the rest of the drops will remain in the community bucket placed in the center of the board.
- Each player will choose a game piece that corresponds with the same color of her/his bucket.
- To determine who goes first, roll the die. The largest number goes first.
- Start from the square that says “GO!”
- Each time the player makes one complete trip around the board the player collects 100 drops.

3) **What each square means** –

The square with this symbol:



Means the player’s bucket has just been filled. Collect 50 drops from the community bucket.

The square with this symbol:



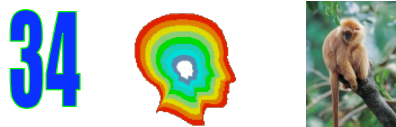
Means the participant must draw a card from the obstacles pile. Read the card and follow the instructions. Put the card back on the bottom of the pile when finished unless otherwise instructed by the card.

The square with this symbol:



Means the participant must draw a card from the goal pile. Here they will be rewarded for progress they have made in their self-leadership. Read the card and then collect the reward on the card.

These symbols:



Mean the participant must draw a card from the question pile. These questions will ask about the content covered in class (these can be changed to suit the instructor's needs). Read the question next to the corresponding symbol on the card. When the player has read the question aloud, she/he should talk among the rest of the players about the right answer. When they feel they have discussed the question thoroughly, return the card to the bottom of the pile and collect 30 drops. If no one knows the answer then the player must pay 30 drops to the community bucket.

The square with this symbol:



Means the participant has dip from someone

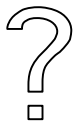
dipped from someone's bucket. Leaders should never else's bucket. The player must pay the community bucket 50 drops.

These symbols:



Mean the participant must draw a card from the Hieroglyphics/Clue pile. These cards have words, concepts, or theories written on them. The participant should pick a partner, then take one minute to draw a hieroglyphic or give clues without saying the word that will represent the word(s) on the card. If the player's partner guesses correctly they each earn 30 drops. If their partner guesses incorrectly, neither player receives any drops, and the card must be returned to the bottom of the pile.

If a player lands on this square:



They can pick a Question card and the subject or they can pick from the Hieroglyphic/Clue cards. This gives them the opportunity to choose their own path.

This symbol:



Means the player loses 100 drops and they must roll a double in order to get off this space and start collecting more drops. If the player does not roll doubles within two turns, she/he may move off the space on the third roll. While players are on this space, they cannot collect drops. If the player is sent to this space, or if they land on it, they are subject to its rules.

4) **Ending the Game** - The game ends when someone’s bucket is empty. Each person needs to count how many Drops they have and the person with the most pieces is the winner.

5) **Quick Play** – In order to speed up the game or to keep things interesting, the instructor may want to set a time limit of 15 to 20 minutes.

Results to Date

“Kick the Bucket!” incorporates all four broad learning principals. In the group setting participants were actively and socially engaged in learning; there was a natural level of competition and eagerness to learn. The game is centered on a leadership theory and therefore the students were learning contextual information while having fun.

The creation of this game led to more exposure to material covered in class and therefore increased retention levels. The process of designing the various aspects of the game (board, instructions, and question cards) aided in the reflective aspect of learning. Students who participated in the game were able to effectively recall and incorporate class concepts into their final papers.

Conclusions/Recommendations

“Kick the Bucket!” is enjoyable to play as well as educational. The game is suitable for incorporation into a variety of leadership presentations for all ages. Professors, professionals, and organizations would be able to develop material that would accommodate their needs. The game designer is currently exploring options for adapting the activity for a member induction program for a student organization. All leadership educators are encouraged to incorporate “Kick the Bucket!” or similar active learning strategies into their leadership programming efforts.

References

- Christopher, E. M., & Smith, L. E. (1987). 1. *Leadership Training Through Gaming: Power, People and Problem-solving*. New York: Nichols.
- Driscoll, M. P. (2002). *How people learn (and what technology might have to do with it)*. Syracuse, NY: Clearinghouse on Information and Technology. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED470032).
- Rath, T., & Clifton, D. O. (2005). *How full is your bucket: Positive strategies for work and Life* (Educator’s edition). New York: Gallup Press.