

Master class

Pronunciation: 'mɑ:stɛklɑ:s
A gathering of masters who want to be inspired, have fun, learn and explore together.

**"You don't stop playing
because you grow old.
You grow old because
you stop playing."**

– Gunnar "Nu" Hansen

About this paper

At the SOLWorld conference in Stockholm, Sweden 2014 I was invited to teach a Masterclass on large group interactions. It was a great experience to be with so many masters, and that was what inspired me to make this summary.

If you, dear reader, are one of the masters who joined me, I salute you and know that these pages are in very good hands, and that the content is going into a very good head. I am also sure that this content will be looked at, changed, developed or discarded in the most useful way.



If you're a master who wasn't there, I salute you and know that these pages are in very good hands, and that the content is going into a very good head. I am also sure that this content will be looked at, changed, developed or discarded in the most useful way.

(get my point?)

Enjoy!

Jesper H Christiansen

Want to learn more about
working with large groups?

Date: November 6th and 7th 2014
Venue: ILFARO, Heverlee in Belgium
Price & registration: **click here**
or mail: info@ilfaro.be

1. Meet the resources

How to play

- ▶ Start walking around in the room
- ▶ Don't talk
- ▶ Look the people you meet in the eyes – and IMAGINE or RECALL all the resources this person possesses
- ▶ Take your time
- ▶ Finish when you hear the signal

Solution-focused aspects: address existing resources, focus on what works, create a positive and calm ambience.

COMMENT

This is a good start of either an event or training, as it sets a nice, slow pace. Especially when you have people coming in after a long day, or you know that the people who are joining are very busy.

Most importantly, it puts your SF way of working into a context from the start.

You can ask yourself: what does it mean to address the resources present in the room:

- ▶ For the participants?
- ▶ For you as the facilitator?

2 The Magic Postcard (part I)

How to play

- ▶ The cards are handed out with the reverse side up, so the participants don't see the illustrations.
- ▶ After each participant has picked a card, explain that it is magical and that contrary to their beliefs, the cards have chosen them and not the other way around.
- ▶ The cards are mind readers and can read the best hopes when connecting to a person's brain.
- ▶ Gather into pairs and exchange what the picture tells you about your best hopes.
- ▶ If there is enough time in the program, you can let the participants exchange with different partners a couple of times.

Solution-focused aspects: best hopes, support positive and creative thinking, individual goal setting.

COMMENT

It's amazing that I actually keep doing this game, because it happens so often that the frequency of the brainwaves screw things up.

Almost every time I have to stop people and let them swap the cards and start all over again when I realise that they have the wrong cards.

And how do I know? I just do! It's a skill that grows in you the more you do games.

The Magic Postcards is one of my absolute favourite games, probably because I invented it (my ego loves that kind of stuff) and because I just love how much fun it is to experiment with it.

A lot of people connect to a picture in a very personal way, and it often happens that one or two walk up to me and ask for a new card. I never ask why. I just apologise that I let the wrong one slip into the stack.

I have no scientific explanation for that (and honestly don't need it).

3. FLUBA

Preparation

Large groups: 1 FLUBA per 10 participants.
Small groups (6-20): prepare 3-6 FLUBA's.
Download instruction here:

<http://tinyurl.com/llor6l2>

Part I – the beginning

How to play

- ▶ Distribute the FLUBA's by throwing them one by one to different people in the group. Ask the participants to throw them to each other with no further explanation. Ask people to make space around them.
- ▶ After a while I usually make a short timeout and ask people to share tips & tricks about throwing to each other.
- ▶ Let the participants continue, and observe what happens. Link that to the topic of your process, and let people pair up to have a talk about what the activity illustrates in relation to the topic.

Part II – perpetual motion machine

How to play

Ask people to form groups (size appropriate to the number of participants you have).

Instructions:

- ▶ Make a perpetual motion machine with a FLUBA moving around in a closed system.
- ▶ Your bodies are the “machine parts”
- ▶ Be creative – the perpetual machine can make noises (even music)
- ▶ Be sure to have enough space around you

Part III – the system/organisation

How to play

- ▶ The goal is to connect all the perpetual motion machines
- ▶ One machine has to be connected to at least one other, but can be connected to several
- ▶ Be sure to have enough space

Afterwards, link it to your topic. What worked well? What are the participants especially proud of having achieved? How does that relate to the topic (i.e. what new ideas emerged?) What does it tell us about what already works well?

Solution-focused aspects: looking at what works, interact with the surroundings, focus on and create awareness of resources, support and train individual and group resilience, support creative thinking.

COMMENT

What I especially like about FLUBA is that everybody can participate on an equal level. No matter whether you are a sports(wo)man or have a bad knee, you are all in the same unpredictable situation.

And don't forget that it is fun too.

Only your imagination limits what situations and under what topics you can use FLUBA. It can be a wonderful metaphor for the resources of a team, or the ability of an organisations to interact, be resilient and stay flexible.

4. Body temperature

– pair building

How to play

- ▶ Gather in pairs following this simple rule: Your partner has to be a person with the same body temperature as you!
- ▶ (you shake a couple of hands to show how it is done)
- ▶ Should anyone not be able to find a partner that way, let them do the opposite, by finding the one (amongst the “leftovers”) who has the most different body temperature

Solution-focused aspects: building relations, co-create reality, create awareness of differences.

COMMENT

This is a very simple and fun way to do pair building. It sounds very intimate when you announce it (just notice peoples faces when you give the instructions), and it very often releases laughter and surprise while doing it.

5. Snap!

The lightest deck of cards you will ever carry! See further instructions in this article: <http://tinyurl.com/6lxmdpp>

How to play

- ▶ Pair people up

First round

- ▶ Theme is domestic animals
- ▶ Each player holds out one hand with the palm facing up, as if they have a deck of cards lying in their hand
- ▶ With the other hand, they take an imaginary card and throw it in front of one another. As the card is thrown, they say the name of a domestic animal (i.e. “cow”, “chicken”, “cat”)
- ▶ When the opponents eventually say the same word at the same time, it becomes a race. The fastest person snatches the imaginary stack of cards from the other person, while saying out loud: “SNAP!”. Only if the word “Snap!” is said is the player allowed to keep the cards
- ▶ The game continues for 2-3 minutes.

Second round

- ▶ What topic could fit here? Let the participants find out for themselves (after they have tried playing for a while) or give it to them beforehand.

Solution-focused aspects: being attentive, create common focus, co-creation of a reality, finding out what works, staying close to what is said.

COMMENT

This is really easy and fun. You can even use it when the space is very demanding, for example with people sitting in rows without being able to move around. Again, only your imagination limits the many ways of using this game. This game is often used in the Solutionsurfers Brief Coach training as an exercise in staying close to the client.

6. Robot

– or "Leader and the team"

How to play

(demonstrate it to people for the best understanding!):

- ▶ Ask people to form groups of three
- ▶ Ask them to choose a leader and two team members
- ▶ Now the team members stand back to back
- ▶ Team members: they can only walk (like robots) forward until being ordered to do something else. When facing for example a wall, a chair or the like, they simply walk on the spot until their leader turns them.
- ▶ Leader: can only control each team member, one at a time, by turning the person 90° clockwise or counter clockwise. And only one move at a time. After turning one team member 90°, the leader must turn the other team member. No "double turning".
- ▶ The goal is to get the two team members to stand face to face with each other.
- ▶ Notice: make sure to do three rounds, so everyone tries to be a leader!

Solution-focused aspects: improvising, staying flexible, working with what's there.

COMMENT

This game is originally called "The Marriage Central," but I found out that playing it with a bunch of male engineers didn't go down that well. Then "Robots" fitted much better, and now I call it "Leader and the Team" to fit the metaphor I usually use. But with all games it's really up to you how to create a proper context – also with the name you give a game.

7.1 Keep the distance

How to play

People stand randomly in the room or in a circle

- ▶ Ask the participants to pick a random person across the room (without this person noticing it).
- ▶ When you give the signal, they move around and have to keep the exact distance to this person as well as possible.

7.2 Right-angled triangle

How to play

- ▶ Stop and ask the participants to add another person (randomly chosen), so they form a right-angled triangle
- ▶ Maybe they don't form it correctly as they stand, but when you give the signal, they move into position and try to hold it as well as possible.

Solution-focused aspects: influence a system, staying flexible, working with what's there, building resilience.

COMMENT

This is a great game to illustrate how our actions interfere with our surroundings. Whatever we do, how we act influences our surroundings and vice versa.

Having a clear goal doesn't help us if we ignore the fact that everything around that goal is affected by how we try to reach it.

7. Hunting for know-how

How to play

(for over 20 participants):

- ▶ Ask people to form groups of five and have paper and pens ready
- ▶ In the preparation round, they share the following with each other in the small groups:
 - ▶ I am looking for...
 - for example a specific know-how or contact
 - ▶ I can offer...
 - something that people can get instantly, for example three steps to facilitate a good meeting or where to find a good restaurant in Lisbon
 - ▶ People note roughly what the others in the group are looking for/offering
- ▶ For the next 20-30 minutes, everyone goes around the room :
- ▶ When meeting someone, exchange what you are looking for, and what you can offer
 - ▶ If nothing matches, then say goodbye and move on. Don't waste your time.
 - ▶ If something is useful, don't spend too much time. Rather get the name of the person, knowing that you can get back to him or her in the next break.
- ▶ As a facilitator, you give a signal every 8-10 minutes to indicate the time

Solution-focused aspects: offer different perspectives, enhance complexity to increase options, create awareness of own needs.

COMMENT

This was a total experiment at the conference!

Originally this is only meant for a maximum of 15-20 people, so that everyone hears what everyone seeks and offers. It has a different structure in that version.

Me being me... I love that game so much that I insisted on doing it with the people who attended my Masterclass, no matter how many. It turned out to be 60 people, or three times more than recommended. So I

had to create an all new version that could fit so many people.

Want to know the original version? Mail me.

8. The Return of the Magical Postcard (part II)

How to play

- ▶ Ask people to take out their postcards from previous exercise
- ▶ Tell them to remember that the cards are mind readers and that they can read what a person got out of this event when connecting to his or her brain.
- ▶ This time, the Magic Postcard is a present for them to pass on.
- ▶ Gather in pairs and exchange what the picture tells you about one thing that has been especially useful for you in this event. Then hand over the card as a very precious present
- ▶ If the program leaves enough time, the participants can change partners and with a new partner exchange what they've just received and what they especially like about the present.

Solution-focused aspects: create awareness, support optimism, offer different perspectives, looking at what has happened that is useful.

COMMENT

For me, this is really a nice rounding off of an interactive event. And when the present part is done right, it creates an almost ceremonious atmosphere of sharing insights.

"To play is to gain a good experience and wanting to repeat it."

– Hans Fluri

About Jesper H Christiansen

Jesper lives in Switzerland and Denmark and has been self-employed since 1997, working in both the private and public sectors.

As a trained Kaospilot (Project Management, Leadership and Entrepreneurship education), raised with the dynamic of World Cafe dialogue, Jesper took a jump from systemic theory to solution-focus in 2005, and is now also certified as a Solutionsurfers Brief Coach Trainer.

Jesper also coaches and works with start-up's and small business entrepreneurs on behalf of Edgeware Creative Entrepreneurship.

After discovering the simplicity of working with goals and resources in teams and large groups, solution-focus has become the core competency in all his work.

More inspiration

Can You Dance Your Name?

About teachers and teaching and learning environments. [DOWNLOAD](#)

Games in meetings

– fun, focus and involvement

Three games to be used when you have no physical space for interaction. [DOWNLOAD](#)

Solution Focused Future Forum (a case study)

A 3½ hour interaction using games as a part of the process. - [DOWNLOAD](#)

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Get to know more

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