

The Candidate: Theater Improv. Game (based on David Ives's "Sure Thing")

Academic Group Dynamics Connections:

- Planning ahead
- Thinking about snap judgements
- Voicing our priorities and values

What You Need:

- A desk
- A bell
- A pen
- Scraps of paper
- A checklist



What to Do:

Do this part at least an hour before the game. Some preparation is required.

1. Put forth scenarios to students and let them choose one. All scenarios involve a person looking for a good candidate. (ex: You're on a date, and you need a list of questions to ask in order to see if this is a good person to date. You're a parent looking for a nanny. Etc.)
2. After students choose a scenario, ask them to write three questions they would ask on scrap paper.
3. Collect the questions and screen them. Compile a checklist of the ones you feel are appropriate and have entertainment potential.

When you are ready to play:

1. Arrange a desk with a chair on either side. The chairs should face one another. A bell should be placed in the middle, and the prepared checklist should be in front of one chair.
2. Ask for two volunteers.
 - a. One student (the interviewer) will have a checklist. The interviewer will be allowed to ask up to three questions. If the other student (the responder) answers a question well, the responder can stay, and another question will be asked. If the answer is not acceptable for any reason, the interviewer will ring the bell, and the responder will leave, tapping another student in the audience as a replacement.
 - i. Check off questions as you ask them.
 - b. One student (the responder) will improvise answers. If the responder survives three questions in a row without hearing the bell, the interviewer will leave, and the student answering questions will take his/her place. The interviewer will tap a student in the audience to be a replacement for the responder.

Keep it PG, please.

It is important to move quickly in this game. If you pause for too long, we will become bored.

Variations

- This can be any scenario where you need information to judge a candidate for a position. (You're an employer at ____, looking for a good worker. You're a parent in a country where you're expected to arrange a marriage for your child. You're a voter looking for a good politician. You're a college admissions officer interviewing a potential student... etc.)
- You can also create panels on each side, but the students need to be very sure of the game's rules before you complicate it.
- You can also have both sides improvise, but only with a group you really trust; it's safer to screen the questions.

AOP Questions (These will vary depending on your scenario. Let's say you're interviewing a nanny.)

1. How did you generate the questions you submitted for the checklist? Where did you come up with those ideas?
2. Which qualities did you find important when considering who should work with your children? What does this reveal about your priorities and or values as a person?
3. Which answers did you find worthy of dismissal and why?
4. Did you ever disagree with a bell ringing or not ringing? Describe that moment. What does that tell you about how people in the classroom think differently about this topic?
5. Think about the bell-ringing moments. Were there times when people rang and dismissed others too quickly? Or times when you wanted more information before you rang that bell? Describe those moments.
 - a. Were there times when you felt it was absolutely right to ring the bell? Explain why you are sure you made the correct decision.
6. Which answers felt sincere and which felt like they were constructed for your entertainment? How could you tell the difference?
7. Think about a time you "rang a bell" on another person. How do you feel about that decision after this exercise?