

# Games and Simulation Exercises



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## Introduction

There is often confusion about the differences between "Games", "Exercises" and "Simulations". Indeed, simulations are often referred to as "Management Games" which adds to the confusion.

**Games -** Games have players who work to a clearly defined set of rules. They can be competitive or co-operative and usually involve some form of physical activity. They are most often used as icebreakers, energisers, or to release tension.

**Exercises -** Exercises deal with specific problems or issues and require participants to reach a conclusion about the issue or problem.

**Simulations-** Simulations place participants in a realistic set of circumstances and require them to take on roles representing real life.

## Simulations

In any simulation the participants take on roles which represent the real world, or as near the real world as it is possible to get in a training situation. The participants are asked to respond to the information that is given to them as they would in real life. The simulation makes participants experience the consequences of decisions they make and their general performance as a group.

A simulation needs to have a realistic background scenario against which participants can make valid decisions and plans. This information can be provided in written form, by a role play or by using video or audio tapes.

Producing a realistic situation which really meets the needs of the participants and achieves the learning objectives set by the presenter takes a considerable amount of time and work. This must be allowed for when planning the course programme.

## Using Simulations

Simulations are an appropriate method for helping participants to acquire knowledge and are also valuable when working in the area of attitudes and values as they cause participants to think things through for themselves and, if the simulation is well run, to realise the consequences of their decisions and attitudes.

Examples of how simulations might be used are:

- long term sectional programme planning
- development of Scouting in a Group or District
- planning a training experience

## Running the Simulation

Once you have decided to use a simulation to meet the learning objectives of the participants, there are a number of points that need to be carefully dealt with.

1. Make sure that the initial briefing material is as comprehensive as you can make it. If participants are unsure of details right at the beginning, they will be less willing to become involved in the necessary role play of the simulation.

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2. Try to think through all the likely reactions to the various situations you feed into the simulation so that you can respond quickly and appropriately to participants queries, inputs, etc.
3. Beware of the tendency of some participants who will try to 'beat the system', rather than getting involved in the simulation.
4. Consider how you will introduce material that needs to be fed into participants during the simulation - written messages, staff members role playing, telephone messages, etc.

### **Evaluation**

It is important that you build in time for evaluation at the end of the simulation so that the learning from the game can be noted and reinforced for participants. You will need to allow some time for de-roling as participants often become deeply engrossed in the roles they have been playing.

You should plan to evaluate the following:

- the simulation itself
- the success, or otherwise of participants in completing the task
- any particular attitudes, problems, etc. identified during the simulation
- the learning achieved by the participants

how this learning can be applied to the participants' real roles "back home".