

Play the Dice

From Phase 1: Entry

Phase 1 contains methods that can be used in programmes for (recently) immigrated and refugee teachers in Higher Education to start with the topic of heterogeneity at schools. As an introduction to the topic, the methods are characterised by high openness with regard to the question of what heterogeneity actually means and what it can or should mean in the school context.

a) General information

Time frame: 60 min

Social form(s): Group work with partly changing participants

Number of people: 16-25

Short summary: Groups of 4-5 participants play a game of dice in which they are not allowed to speak and 1-2 participants observing the scene. The three to four groups receive individual game instructions. Although these are largely similar, they also have deviating rules in some crucial aspects. The aim of the game is to achieve the highest score by playing the dice. A game ends when the first person has scored the required points.

After the participants have read the instructions, they are collected again and the game starts. After the first round, the winner of each group goes clockwise to the next group. Again, after the second round, the winner of each group goes clockwise one group and now also the loser moves one group counter clockwise. Because of the slightly different instructions in each group and the rule not to be able to speak, the change of participants inevitably leads to irritations in the game, because all players are playing regarding the rules, they know from the first group they were part of.

After the second round of changing the groups, the game is over and a conversation follows about the non-verbal complications and the different rules of the game with their consequences for communication in the group.

b) Description of the method (preparation, working steps, aim)

To prepare the method you need one dices per group are, the slightly different instruction for each small group printed, one sheet of paper and a pen for each participant.

- Small groups are formed with 4-5 participants each. Each small group sits around a table and gets 1 dice, 1 instruction manual and 1 piece of paper and a pen per player.
- The players are asked not to speak during the whole time and to read the instructions carefully before they are collected again!
- After the first round, the winner of each group goes clockwise to the next group. After the second round, the winner of each small group goes clockwise to the next group again and the loser moves one group counter clockwise.

- After this round, the game is over and a conversation follows about the experiences of the players in regard to the non-verbal complication and the different rules of the game and their consequences for communication strategies within the small groups.
- Also, the observer can give feedback on how they experienced the atmosphere when the players of one small group had to negotiate the game.
- Questions for the final discussion could be for example: How was (non-)compliance with the rules negotiated perceived? What happened when the new group member broke the rules? What was the relationship between minority and majority in the groups like?

The aim of this method is to learn to empathise with different perspectives and to reflect on different emotions, formations and expectations in groups. The importance of the knowledge of implicit rules of different groups and societies for successful communication is illustrated. Mechanisms between ingroups and outgroups within the game can be compared with social processes and critically reflected upon. For example, the way of interacting with new people in a group as well as with minorities is discussed. Because the game is based on fictitious rules, intercultural communication problems can be reflected on a rather abstract level. No examples of misunderstandings with recourse to existing cultural relations are given. This avoids the possibility that preconceptions or prejudices might influence the evaluation or that cultures might be judged and hierarchised in some form.

c) Reflecting questions on how to implement the methods in programmes for (recently) immigrated and refugee teachers

How can the participants and lecturers contribute their knowledge in a way that does not culturalise?

Since attribution processes are explicitly discussed in this game, possible culturalisations within the group can also be thematised and deconstructed. Additionally, make sure that during the game topics such as competition, exclusion and inclusion as well as solidarity are critically reflected on.

What must be considered so that this method does not lead to stereotypes and/or discriminatory categorisations?

- It is a rule that the winner is changing the group to play the next round. And it is obvious that it is not attached to any other personal reason.
- The leader has to be attentive that group dynamics does not change in a discriminative mood.
- When talking about the experiences in the game, everyone should mind his speech.

How to work with this method in a language sensitive way/how to include multilingualism?

The individual game descriptions could be translated in different languages, since an exact understanding of the rules is very important for the overall method.

During the game no spoken language is used, which makes it possible for everyone to participate. The final discussion may also take place multilingually, if it is ensured that the results are finally accessible to all participants.

How to use this method in a participatory way?

All players should have the opportunity to contribute their experiences with different social structures. Language barriers should also be removed as far as possible (see above). Overall, it can help participants to have some time between the game and the discussion phase to formulate their thoughts and, if necessary, translate them.

Possible variations of the method

A variation may be that some participants are given an observing role and do not participate in a group. This enables them to perceive and describe structures such as group dominance or assimilation.

Possible application (for other contexts, e.g. schools)

The method can also be applied in schools. Here it is important to know the social structure of the class well and to ensure a pleasant atmosphere for discussion. If the method is used with younger students or pupils, the game situation can be compared with school rules for general tolerance or anti-bullying. It is especially important to pay attention to whether and what experiences students have had with intolerance or bullying in order to avoid unpleasant emotions.

Tips

It is very important that no player speaks during the game!

Example/Possible topic

Game instruction (group 1)

Play the dice

The central rule of the game is that you are **not allowed to speak** during the whole time!!!

All players sit in a circle and receive 1 piece of paper and 1 pen per participant and 1 dice for the whole group.

The **youngest player is allowed to start** throwing the dice, then it continues clockwise.

Each player writes the number rolled on his*her sheet of paper and adds his*her other rolled numbers to it, so that the amount increases from round to round.

The number 4 has a special function. If the **number 4** is thrown, the player writes down the points and then plays **the dice for a second time!**

The player who first reaches the amount of **50 wins** the game and finishes it.

Game instruction (group 2)

Play the dice

The central rule of the game is that you are **not allowed to speak** during the whole time!!!

All players sit in a circle and receive 1 piece of paper and 1 pen per participant and 1 dice for the whole group.

The **youngest player is allowed to start** throwing the dice, then it continues clockwise.

Each player writes the number thrown on their piece of paper and sums up the number thrown so that the amount increases from round to round.

The number 1 and the number 6 have a special function. If the **number 1** is played, the participant is **not allowed to write any points** on his*her piece of paper and has to skip the round.

If the **number 6 is played**, the player writes down the points and then **play the dice again**.

The player who first reaches the amount of **50 wins** the game and finishes it.

Game instruction (group 3)

Play the dice

The central rule of the game is that you are **not allowed to speak** during the whole time!!!

All players sit in a circle and receive 1 piece of paper and 1 pen per participant and 1 dice for the whole group.

The **youngest player is allowed to start** throwing the dice, then it continues clockwise.

Each player writes the number rolled on his*her paper sheet and adds his*her other numbers to it so that the amount increases from round to round.

The **number 2** has a special function. If the 2 is rolled, the participant may **not write any points** on his*her piece of paper, he has to skip, so to speak!

The player who first reaches the amount of **50 wins** the game and finishes it.

Game instruction (group 4)

Play the dice:

The central rule of the game is that you are **not allowed to speak** during the whole time!!!

All players sit in a circle and receive 1 piece of paper and 1 pen per participant and 1 dice for the whole group.

The **youngest player is allowed to start** throwing the dice, then it continues clockwise.

Each player writes the number played on his or her paper sheet and adds the following numbers to it so that the amount increases from round to round.

The player who first reaches the amount of **50 wins** the game and finishes it.

d) Further information

A similar game that uses playing cards can be found at:

https://www.dija.de/ikl/methodenbox-interkulturell/?no_cache=1&tx_fedijamethoden_pi1%5BshowUid%5D=94 [29.02.2020].

transfer e.V. (Hrsg.): Reader zu dem trägerübergreifenden Grundkurs für Leiter/innen der internationalen Jugendbegegnung. Köln 2000.



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