

Management Games for Enlightenment

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GAMES are fun to play. They can enlighten, too, if games are analyzed to reveal rules, structures, motives, and rewards which fit not only the game, but social activities engaged in by many people. In this way, contemporary education can be studied through comparison of educational activities with games.

Four Games

Many educators, as well as school bureaucracies, consciously or unconsciously are involved in activities which resemble games. Four games played in many educational organizations are *Bureaucracy*, *Deviance*, *Performance*, and *Game*. These games will be described and then a tentative analysis will be developed.

Bureaucracy

Bureaucracy is a verbal management game. The object is to secure as many positions in vertical and horizontal occupational structures as possible. Two or more players can either build on each other or play competitively in developing job and task classifications for different bureaucratic arrangements. The kinds of jobs and tasks included represent those most frequently found in bureaucratic organizations. The purpose of *Bureaucracy*, then, is to develop, as rapidly and as completely as possible, a hierarchy and a territory of job classifications which are interconnected and interdependent. Each job function must be assigned a number sig-

nifying a level within a hierarchy, such that there is interdependence between the job and the number as well as interdependence between the jobs.

As an example, the positions that may be established in *Bureaucracy* include a Paper Form Shuffler I and a Waste Paper Disposer I to correspond. A Paper Form Shuffler I can use only paper which can be disposed of by a Waste Paper Disposer I. A supervisor of the Paper Form Shuffler would have the Paper Form Shuffler Supervisor I title, but a classification number II would be given to a Paper Form Shuffler who handles supposedly more important papers. Given the II, the Paper Form Shuffler must then have a corresponding Waste Paper Disposer who could dispose of those papers shuffled by the Paper Form Shuffler II. A Coordinator III might attempt to keep everything straight, and an Administrator II might assist, etc.

Deviance

Deviance is a verbal and observational game that can also be played by two or more players. It can also be played by one as long as there are others to observe. The players of *Deviance* are "aware," whereas others, the nonplayers, are not aware. The aware persons assign to another who enters their life-space a classification and personal score of either essentially normal (one), suspicious (two), or deviant (four). This initial per-

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Today's Universities

Brown THE LIBERAL UNIVERSITY An Institutional Analysis

J. DOUGLAS BROWN, formerly Princeton University. (1969), 263 pages, \$7.95

Emphasis is placed on the integration of university organization, policies, and administrative procedures into an effective whole, and how these factors balance the many countervailing pressures which universities presently face.

Gould TODAY'S ACADEMIC CONDITION

SAMUEL B. GOULD, former Chancellor, State University of New York. (1970), 101 pages, \$4.95

Dr. Samuel B. Gould gives a sense of the contemporary situation inside America's colleges and universities. He describes with concise clarity and flashes of wit the academic response, and lack of response, to wholly new conditions.

Keeton-Hilberry STRUGGLE AND PROMISE: A Future for Colleges

MORRIS KEETON, Antioch College, and CONRAD HILBERRY, Kalamazoo College. (1969), 416 pages, \$9.95

This book addresses itself to the inquiry "Why should private liberal arts colleges survive or thrive?" If they should, for what functions? And how can they successfully manage?"

Rauh THE TRUSTEESHIP OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

MORTON A. RAUH, Vice President, Finance and Planning, Antioch College. (1969), 160 pages, \$7.95

This broadly based presentation of the function of college and university trusteeship provides useful information for both the new and experienced trustee, and others who are interested in the position.

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY DIVISION McGRAW-HILL BOOK CO.

330 West 42nd Street, New York, N. Y. 10036

sonal classification is based on the person's appearance.

The purpose of the game then is to continue to observe the unaware person over time and assign action scores, such as 1, 2, 3, for behaviors ranging from normality to deviance. Each significant action or situation can be scored and assigned a number. It is up to the aware players to determine, through gradual development, the scoring system for this aspect of the game. The unaware person's initial classification is then used with the action score; the net result is obtained by multiplying the personal classification of normal, suspicious, or deviant times the action score.

Deviant-looking people who act deviantly end up with the highest scores, while normal-looking people who act normally receive low scores. Most people achieve low scores, with relatively few being assigned large numbers. After the unaware person leaves, the aware players can compare their totals. Then, they can make further comparisons of initial impressions and of those behaviors they regarded as significant actions.

Performance

Performance is played by one or more aware people. The purpose of *Performance* is to engage an unaware person (or even an aware person without his conscious knowledge) in a dialogue or behavioral action which can be extended beyond any reasonable limit. The engagement of someone in an extended dialogue can be developed through slightly exaggerated encouragement to continue talking about some familiar topic. The involvement of the unaware person in behavior which goes beyond his usual limit of tolerance is much more difficult. It may necessitate staging events of a theatrical nature, with several aware players. This can still be done in most offices, however.

An example on the verbal level might be simply to add, "Really, tell me more," whenever the unaware person is talking about something well known, or something esoteric or inconsequential, to the aware player of *Performance*. After an appropriately lengthy

period of time, the aware player can inform the unaware person that he has been the victim of *Performance*. He has been made to perform and essentially has been lured into behaving in a relatively deviant and/or meaningless way. On the other hand, creativity may occur too. For example, many students have engaged in looking to the left of an instructor repeatedly and collectively in efforts to move the instructor toward the left. Usually the instructor remains unconscious of the situation, and also usually moves.

Game

Game represents an ultimate in gamesmanship. The rules are simple. Rules and regulations of which no one else knows or can be sure govern each person. Other people must guess what the rules and regulations are, and these rules may change at any time. The same situation exists with groups and organizations, too.

The behavior of the individual, group, or organization is partly determined by history, environment, and imagination for new possibilities. This information is never completely known by other individuals, groups, or organizations.

In fact, each of us is playing *Game* all the time. Every group or organization is playing *Game*, too, in the sociological realm. With the realization that *Game* constitutes "reality," this game becomes the ultimate of all games and gamesmanship.

Analysis

The introduction of these games to studying an educational organization can be revealing of bureaucratic structures. The fit between social arrangements, such as organizations and creative and/or intelligent personalities, becomes evident through analysis of the games being played.

Bureaucracy is a low-level game to add more resources to the school, or to climb in the traditional power structure. If played as a game, *Bureaucracy* readily leads to fantasy. When examined, *Bureaucracy* releases hostile feelings induced by organizational stress.

The frustrations felt by people caught up in bureaucratic structures can be revealed in stark relief, especially by teachers and students.

The example cited earlier for *Bureaucracy* readily illustrates a too narrow range of duties in which even shuffling papers can be divided by how important the papers seem to be, and in which shuffling papers is differentiated from disposing of them. Broadening responsibilities might constitute one action that could reduce the tension that resulted in the playing of *Bureaucracy* in this particular form.

Deviance is a useful game for exploring the meaning which various outside people represent to the organization and to ascertain behaviors or actions which appear somewhat different from those acceptable to the group. Assigning points for deviant personal appearances and for actions can define the life-space of normality and abnormality. The normative appearance and behavior of persons over time can be studied through analysis of deviance. The organization, its behavior repertoires, and its personnel can be placed in a framework, similar to an in-group and out-group situation. *Deviance* can help managers of organizations either to broaden or to restrict the appearances and behavior appropriate for personnel within the organization.

An example of *Deviance* may illustrate this. Imagine yourself, being unaware, entering a room where other aware people observe. Initially, of course, they must classify you, based on appearance, as either normal, suspicious, or deviant. They do not know among themselves how they have classified you, so their classifications may be different. The actions you engaged in during time spent in the office will be noted and scored. After you leave, the aware players will announce numbers. The aware players will be able to compare their numbers based on their appearance classification of you and the scores assigned to various significant acts you engaged in during your visit. This may facilitate a discussion of your attributes as they observed you, as well as the action framework. How many points were assigned for you and for

your various actions will tell something about you.

More significantly, the assignment of points will tell about them. How they view themselves and their organization will help to determine whom they see as deviant (from their own appearance) and what actions they see as deviant (from the actions deemed appropriate for the organization). If the players of *Deviance* classify young people, the physically handicapped, women, blacks, or Jews as deviant, this message should be examined. Changes may be needed. If the actions classed as deviant include having bright ideas, talking too much, or picking one's nose, other changes may be indicated.

Performance is one-upmanship which tests out the limits of personalities. So long as the performer does not get hurt, it represents a mildly hostile and amusing game for making meetings, conferences, and other organizational activities more lively. When the limits are reached, either verbally or behaviorally, something important becomes evident about that person and his personality. Opportunity to exceed the limits has been rejected, but greater awareness of self can result for the performer, and the aware players of *Performance*.

Game is reality, but one must become a step removed from reality and regard reality from another level. To become aware of self and of one's group of co-workers as being caught in a bureaucratic structure is one thing, but to be really aware is to realize it is possible to move toward viable alternatives. The organizational structures we live by are patterned interactions of behavior. The games people play are also patterned interactions of behavior. Mankind is free to invent, innovate, and build new patterns of interaction, and in this way new organizations can come into being. *Game* is a realization that self or one's group is an entity, with an identity and the power to make independent moves to survive, maintain, and flourish.

We can now review the games within another typology, an examination of the development of a static pattern that moves on a continuum to an unstructured situation. *Bureaucracy* represents an acceptance of the

static world as it is. It simply takes the existing models of society and organizations and adds to them and builds on them. When we play *Deviance*, we begin to look at the limits and explore what is beyond those limits in terms of a normative model. *Deviance* tries to locate and identify those static concepts which define normality and which constrain us in a given pattern.

When we examine the game of *Performance*, we begin to develop an open-ended game which can go beyond already existing static systems. *Performance* is an unstructured game which can be extended almost limitlessly. *Performance* represents a way to go beyond the limitations which we become aware of only through such games as *Deviance*. The ultimate is *Game*, of course, in which we who are aware can think about the system and alternatives, with implications for action and practice. *Game*, then, essentially provides a rationale with which we can develop our own systems and go beyond any existing frameworks.

Applied to organizations, game playing can reveal where the players are and in which direction they are moving. When the members of an organization become aware of the level of game they are playing, they can proceed to higher levels.

Often the contemporary educator plays *Bureaucracy*, or if he is outstanding, he is involved at least sometimes in *Deviance*. Rarely are creative explorations of individual and group limits made. Rarely are people challenged to go beyond in a *Performance*-like exploration of self and society. Education becomes too frequently a way to bind people to the existing frameworks and structures, rather than to free them.

It is most evident that games have implications for behavior in reality situations. Not only are games the outgrowth of existing social interactions and behavior but they also, with appropriate analysis, can be used to recognize and change patterns of interaction on an organizational level. The games can be used by educators, as well as by students, for learning about organizations and themselves. □

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