Overview:

Shipwrecked is a simulation activity that is ideal for developing, practicing, and assessing communication and teamwork skills. The premise of the simulation is that 4-5 individuals have been shipwrecked on an island. Each team member has their own character profile with information; however, not all the information is reliable or accurate. As the activity progresses, the team must make decisions about how they will travel around the island, what tools and materials they need to survive, and how to escape from the island. The simulation is “low-tech,” and it requires some paper-based materials, group work space, and approximately one hour to complete.

Background and Information:

This activity was adapted by Michelle Campbell based on Ken Jones' activity, Shipwrecked, which is published in Graded Simulations I, Survival (see citation below).

Objectives:

As a result of this activity, participants will be able to:

1. Develop techniques for verbal and nonverbal communication with characters with backgrounds and motives different than their own (verbal and non-verbal communication).
2. Articulate how different decision-making models within the simulation result in different experiences and end results for the simulation (teamwork).
3. Practice and assess their own ability to suspend judgment and value interactions with characters with different backgrounds and motives than their own (openness).
4. Explore their relationship to ambiguous contexts based on missing or unreliable information presented by their own character or other characters in the simulation (curiosity).

Time:

1 hour

Group Size:

Small group

Materials:

Scenario Sheet (1 for each participant), Profiles (each individual within a group of 3-5 should have a different profile), Map pieces (at least one set per group), Best Practices Info Sheet for Facilitator (all in Downloads). Room that includes a large table for each group to gather around and a large table in the front of the room for the facilitator to lay out map pieces.

Intercultural Development Continuum Stages:

- Denial
- Minimization
- Acceptance

Adapted by Michelle M. Campbell (2018). Purdue University: West Lafayette, Indiana from the following:

AAC&U Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Goals:

Openness:

• To initiate and develop interactions with culturally different others.
• To suspend judgment in valuing interactions with culturally different others.

Verbal and Nonverbal Communication:

• To articulate a complex understanding of cultural differences in verbal and nonverbal communication (e.g., demonstrates understanding of the degree to which people use physical contact while communicating in different cultures or use direct/indirect and explicit/implicit meanings).
• To skillfully negotiate a shared understanding based on these differences.

Other Skills:

Teamwork, Mentorship & Leadership

Activity Instructions:

1. Divide participants into groups of three to five.
   
   Note: Groups of five tend to function the best.

2. Assign each person in the groups a character and provide them with their assigned character’s profile. Also provide all players asked to the character Esk with her diary (in Downloads). Character names are Avon, Blythe, Clyde, Don, and Esk. In groups with three or four members, Avon and/or Clyde’s profiles are collapsed into Blyth’s profile:

   • Group of 5: Esk (+ diary), Blyth, Don, Clyde, and Avon.
   • Group of 4: Esk (+diary), Blyth (+ Avon), Don, and Clyde.
   • Group of 3: Esk (+ diary), Blyth (+ Avon + Clyde), and Don.

3. Also provide groups with at least one set of map pieces as well as Scenario Sheets (in Downloads) and explain the scenario and the rules to the participants.

The Scenario:

You have been shipwrecked. You are with two or three other people who have been shipwrecked along with you, but you do not know each other very well. Each person in the group has important skills or information to help your group survive this ordeal; however, that does not mean you will survive. Your path is fraught with danger. You may encounter deadly animals, or you may die of thirst or starvation. The only way to make it out of this alive is to communicate with your group, but beware of those who present their opinions as fact! Who can you trust? You will have to find it out the hard way: communication and experience.

The Rules:

1. You must stay together. You cannot split up.
2. You cannot move diagonally.
3. Each movement from a map square equals one day of movement. You can go to new map squares or retrace your steps, but each movement equals one day. Each day will be recorded in Esk’s diary.
4. You must ask the Controller for new map squares (by letter) or for spears, ropes, and the raft when you are entitled to it. If you do not ask for it, you do not have it.

5. You may ask the Controller clarifying questions at any time, but the Controller cannot tell you which way to go or not to go. You are on your own in this hostile environment.

6. You must complete your tasks in 31 days without running out of water or food.

7. If you encounter deadly animals, run out of water, run out of food, or take longer than 31 days, your group has died.

8. Each group has 3 deaths before the simulation is over. Upon the death of your group, you must start back at square “S,” and Esk must begin a new diary. You may keep your map squares and any spears, ropes, or rafts that you have obtained.

**Best Practices for Facilitating Shipwrecked!**

- If possible, assemble groups and send profiles ahead of time via email. In a classroom situation, it's important to stress to students that this class period involves a lot of preparation, and students need to notify the facilitator/instructor if they cannot attend so that s/he can make group adjustments.
- This activity can be used for groups that are already pre-formed, as in groups that have been assigned for a class project, for example. If there are not pre-formed groups, it is important to make sure that the groups are diverse.
- Esk (the diary-keeper) should be played by the most attentive students in the class.
- International students should not be relegated to one or two groups by themselves.
- If there are concerns about reading comprehension, definitely make sure students have the profiles and rules at least 24 hours ahead of time.
- The profiles have been adjusted to enable a group to have as few as three people and as many as five people. From previous experience, groups of five tend to function best.¹
- For undergraduate students, instituting a 10 minute discussion time before they are able to ask for map pieces can greatly improve the longevity of the simulation and their chances for survival. Because this simulation requires communication and full disclosure of information for any chance of success, a 10 minute discussion time can encourage good behavior.
- One of the objectives of the simulation is for students to experience tolerating and navigating ambiguity. Between the directions and profiles, students have most, but not all, information they need to be successful. Students may ask clarifying questions, but the facilitator should not offer too much information unless a particular group seems to be very stuck. Do not be afraid to tell students that they need to talk to each other more before they will receive an answer.

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¹ Group of 5: Esk (+ diary), Blyth, Don, Clyde, and Avon.

Group of 4: Esk (+diary), Blyth (+ Avon*), Don, and Clyde.

Group of 3: Esk (+ diary), Blyth (+ Avon + Clyde*), and Don.

* In Groups of 4 and 3 members, Avon and/or Clyde’s profiles are collapsed into Blyth’s profile. The profile states that Avon and/or Clyde have died and told Blyth what they knew before they perished.

Adapted by Michelle M. Campbell (2018). Purdue University: West Lafayette, Indiana from the following:

• Because it can get quite hectic during the simulation itself, assign each group a “runner” to request map pieces, equipment, and to ask questions. The facilitator should set up all map pieces at the front of the room and give the out as requested.
• For groups who die before the simulation time is over, you can allow them to restart with all their map pieces but with a new journal. Groups will get competitive over who can win without dying, and it is fine to encourage this competition if it meets the goals and objectives of the activity.
• Time should be saved at the end for a debrief of about 10 minutes. Using the Thiagi debrief method works well for this activity, but the facilitator should be flexible in their questions to accommodate the learning objectives of the group.

Related Tools:

Tools to use in conjunction with this lesson:

• Thiagi Debrief
  o Use this tool to debrief after participants complete the simulation.