

## Great Ideas for Teaching Students Application

Activity Title: *Event Planning Roulette*

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Course: COM 209/HRM 209 Event Planning & Management

Course Features:

The world of Event Planning is complicated and contains many variables. Students in this interdisciplinary course are usually studying Communication or Hospitality. They learn that events are more than weddings, and examine a host of event possibilities that range in size from 20-20,000. Included in the curriculum are discussions of budgets, contracts and licenses, marketing, as well as a host of communication concepts that effect the planning and execution of any event.

Event planning and the challenges that come with it don't always have clear cut solutions. Students have to learn to think on their feet and problem solve creatively.

This activity would be a test of the students' cumulative knowledge towards the end of the semester and could be completed in pairs, small groups, or as an entire class.

Target Course Student Learning Outcomes:

- Compare and contrast the unique characteristics of events and discuss issues relevant to the field of event management.
- Explain the logic, finances, legal and promotional requirements of event management.
- Analyze techniques of advertising, promoting, and marketing special events.
- Demonstrate necessary skills for effective leadership and management of an event.
- Identify situations and develop procedures to deal with health and safety issues for events.
- Prepare, collect, and compile data to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of an event from the client, staff, and management viewpoints.

Target Institutional Student Learning Outcomes:

- Please list which ISLO's are being specifically addressed.

*X Communication Skills*

*x Critical and Creative Thinking Skills*

*x Ethical and Civic Engagement Practices*

*x Multi-cultural and Global Awareness*

*x Quantitative and Computational Skills*

*Technological Literacy*

Activity Description:

This activity is a game. There are five categories of cards, with each category having 8-12 choices. Categories are as follows:

1. Event Type (wedding, concert, fundraiser, conference)
2. Budget (from \$250-\$10,000)
3. Venue (Beach, theatre, park, etc)
4. Event Size (less than 20 to 1,000)
5. Disaster (hurricane, missing staff, health department shuts food down)

Students begin by choosing an event type, a size, location and budget card. Students are given 10 minutes to brainstorm (alone or in small groups), using the combination of cards they have chosen to create a cohesive event. They must explain to the class how they would approach this event with the variables they have chosen.

Once all students or groups have described their event, they will be thrown the disaster card that will complicate some aspect of the running of the event. This disaster could be as simple as a missing key note speaker to an impending hurricane, so they must then explain how they are going to fix this problem.

This game will challenge their ability to think creatively as well as indicate their cumulative knowledge of a comprehensive list of event needs.

Variations for this game include using individuals, teams of two, small groups. In addition, this could be used as a final exam, with students taking their card choices home and completing a written assignment.

Alignment:

This activity would most likely be given at the end of the semester, after students have covered the text materials and have participated in a variety of event management opportunities. With the combination of knowledge gained during the semester, they would be expected to consider all crucial aspects of any given event as well as problem solve creatively without panicking or creating more problems than necessary.

Students in this course have attended and observed an outside event, have volunteered for an event, and as a class have planned and executed an event for a client. They should be well prepared to work through this activity, giving them more confidence regarding their ability to successfully work in the event planning field.

For those continuing in the hospitality field, this type of “practice” is invaluable to their success in the industry. For those studying communication, this activity reminds them of the many aspects of communication theory that they need to keep in mind in any supervisory or leadership position.

#### Assessment:

The rubric that accompanies this is simple. Points are given for each category with Unacceptable/Satisfactory/Excellent being the measures. One separate category is assigned for the overall plan.

#### Feedback:

The activity was done at the end of the semester, as a fun capstone activity. I broke the students into three small groups, allowing them to select one card at a time. They were given ten minutes to figure out their theme, organize their budget, and come to agreement about how they would run their event. They were instructed to be ready to present their plan with all of the necessary pieces to the class.

I held the "Disaster" card as a surprise, but they knew it was coming and asked for it before I mentioned it. This was a good indicator that they had learned that "something always goes wrong", but that they needed to keep moving forward. It was best done as a group activity, while there was a lot of laughter, the students really attacked the fictional event with creativity.

The challenge is in the scoring. When we did this, we put all of the necessary variables on the board, and allowed everyone to give feedback. These variables included their required pieces (the cards) but also those things that they knew would be needed (ie. licenses, parking, invitations, etc). Scoring was rather "loose", because it was an experimental activity and students were granted credit for participating. The best part of the activity was the discussion that we had as an entire class.

Because so much of event planning is done in teams, I don't know that I would recommend this as an individual assignment. Watching how the students worked with one another made me realize it was best as a group activity.

In the future, I would create a list (similar to the one we put up on the board) of all of the pieces that the students are expected to cover and perhaps have a more formal score. This was a challenge because not all events needed all categories.

We played this twice, and the first day was definitely better. The second time around it lost its novelty and they students rushed to conclusions. So, best as a one day activity, at the end of the semester.