Vets at Play

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Slides modified from Jill Mackay’s presentation at the Medical Forum Conference
What is ‘play’?
Defining Play

- Play is the *voluntary movement across boundaries*, opening with total absorption into a *highly flexible field*, *releasing tension in ways that are pleasurable*, *exposing players to the unexpected*, and *making transformation possible*.

- Gordon 2009
Defining play: Why consider using it in the veterinary course?

• ‘a vague word that is used to describe a wide variety of motor patterns’ – Bekoff (1984)

  – Fine tunes skill development

  – Reinforces social bonds

  • Communication skills
  • Teamwork
  • Mental resilience
  • Critical thinking/creative problem solving
  • Motor coordination (Clinical skills)

  • Stress relief
  • Social confidence
  • Social awareness
The Vet Futures Action Plan (2016-2020) recommended:

2) Enhance moral reasoning and ethical decision-making in education, policy-making, practice-based research and everyday veterinary work

12) Deliver peer support and/or mentoring in all UK vet schools and improve support for vets post-graduation

15) Help veterinary professional to work with uncertainties and develop reflective practice, starting with undergraduates

31) Explore ways to develop the next generation of veterinary leaders including by identifying and nurturing talent, and providing them with the skills and opportunities to succeed
Our Wants

• Provide opportunity for:
  – Students to experience failure in a safe environment
  – Students explore concepts opposed to their own morality
  – Students have fun!

• Magic circle where rules do not directly apply
  – Whitton (2018)
Our Aims: Create a *Playful* Kobayashi Maru Scenario

- A recurring concept in Star Trek
- An unwinnable scenario to teach failure
- Each Captain deals with it differently

*Remember:* Play is the voluntary movement across boundaries, opening with total absorption into a highly flexible field, releasing tension in ways that are pleasurable, exposing players to the unexpected, and making transformation possible.
The Kobayashi Maru

• Unwinnable scenarios …
  – “How we deal with death is at least as important as how we deal with life”
  – Develop awareness about how values, emotions and perceptions affect scenarios – Bruni-Bossi & Willness (2016)
  – Explore ‘cheating’ in safe scenarios (US Military) – Conti & Caroland (2011)
Our Set Up

- 100+ first year students
- First degree
- International, Scottish, rUK, EU
- Embedded within Professional Skills course

- + 4th year students to help
- Split class into 4
The Play’s The Thing …

- Marketed as ‘negotiation skills’
- In groups of between 20 and 30

- Each player gets a role
- Each role has a ‘personal goal’
- Each role has a piece of information or ‘power’ that is of use to the game
Example Role

Briefing: Doctor 1

Overview:
You are responsible for the good health of everyone in Roslin.

Information You Know:
33% of people infected with the bacteria develop into full blown symptomatic zombieitis. Odds are, one in three infected people will turn.

Abilities:
You can collect a saliva sample and send it to the lab – the researchers there say they’ve developed a new test to see if somebody is a carrier. This could be a game-changer. You can administer Zombegone – although it’s all stored with the supplies officer.

Your Health:
You’re feeling great.
You received a Zombegone Vaccination 10 months ago.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Last Vaccination Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gate Officer 1</td>
<td>9 Months Ago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gate Officer 2</td>
<td>1 Month Ago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yourself</td>
<td>10 Months Ago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor 2</td>
<td>12 Months Ago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayor</td>
<td>1 Month Ago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Officer (Clinic)</td>
<td>5 Months Ago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Officer (Residential)</td>
<td>8 Months Ago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Officer (Parliament)</td>
<td>3 Months Ago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captain of the Guard</td>
<td>4 Months Ago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Officer (Offices)</td>
<td>11 Months Ago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>11 Months Ago</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Personal Goal [You may reveal this information if you are asked directly]:
You take your job very seriously.

If you succeed in making sure no residents of Roslin are diagnosed with Zombieitis (the Travellers don’t count), you gain +100 points to your final score.
The Play’s The Thing

• To win: the town must survive AND students must achieve their personal goal

• BUT goals are self serving and may put the town at risk

• Rules:
  – cannot move between tables without a signed transfer form
  – no direct communication between tables
  – other than that THERE ARE NO RULES!!!
The Play’s The Thing …

Zombie Plan Outline

- 1st year students go to their respective rooms for 1410
- Fall for 20 minutes (including video and survey) (1430)
- If it hasn’t happened yet – prompt journalism story at 1450
- If it hasn’t happened yet - Prompt trial story at 1510
- Wrap-up around 1530
- We will still wrap up at 1540 (You are free)
- 30 minutes for regroup in LT1 (1st years) and debrief (Starts at 1600)

How to prompt journalism story

- Remind mayor they need to stand up and read out a story (or nominate someone else on their table to stand up). The mayor must approve the story using their form. It must come from the 
  - (if the mayor or someone disobeys, roll with it).

How to prompt trial story

- Ask gate officers if they’ve been able to speak to their lawyer at around 1530 – if not, strongly encourage them to do so
- Remind judge they have to give a ruling before 1520ish at about 1510

At wrap up

- If no zombies tests have been done, ask group to nominate and test – will show zombies
  in village
- Ask group who’s been vaccinated (if anyone)
- Then we will regroup in lecture theatre
Debrief

• Described how they failed

• Provide techniques and strategies for reflection and coping with failure

• Personal accounts of failures (high consequence) from our staff
The Fun!
Evaluation

• Student Research Project
  – Pre, post and retention (to be done) questionnaires

• As part of evaluation project
  – Interviews with student participants (no uptake)
  – Interviews with student helpers
  – Focus group with staff
Evidence of boundary crossing...
Student Evaluation

1st Survey Student Responses

- **Clarity of Aims & Scenario**: There was a lot of information provided that was explained too quickly.
- **Clarity of Roles**: It was fun but disorganization and lack of involvement in the scenario was an issue.
- **Enjoyable**: The class was slightly stressful, but not overly so.
- **Stressful**: The class was slightly stressful, but not overly so.
- **Appropriate Time**: Students were split in wanting either more or less time for the scenario.
- **Should be Used**: Wanted more vet related scenarios in the PCS course.
Sample of Quotes from 1st Survey

The Good

• “Had doubts at the start but this exercise was fantastic. I feel like I actually learned through it too”

• “Like this as it makes you think how these skills would be useful in practice”

• “was so cool and fun”

• “it forces us to really improvise”

• “have more room for trial and error” (Why it should be used in vet course)

The Bad

• “Sounds fake & unprofessional”

• “some people might not like being in a "play"”

• “Not enough information was given on what we could and could not do. The moment I started I already failed my goal, and the whole thing was a mess... for communication it would be fantastic. Such as role play, but this game was not set up well.”

• “It is not a very good or well-explained game”
Sample of Quotes from 1st Survey

The Interesting

- “the voting part wasn't fun… [do not include] the voting part because it made me feel like a failure… just no voting because people have anxiety.

- “Turn up the airconditioning.”

- “use in anatomy to help learn structures in a fun way

- “It could be implemented in PCS course because it really helps us communicate with more people, learn to analyze different information reasonably, and also listen to different people's opinions on different issues eg vaccination with suspicious owners”
Upon reflection… responses from the 2\textsuperscript{nd} survey

- “It was fun and made me think outside the box a bit, and communicate with people I don’t normally which was good but \textbf{the zombie "vets at play" scenario was apparently meant to teach you about failure but I didn't really get that from the session?}”

- “Yes only if its implemented effectively. I believe that there should be distinction between work and play and if by implementing play into our work environment is not done effectively, it might disrupt our work environment - leading to adverse effects (working less, putting less effort, etc.)

- Yes. Gives a chance to learn in a more fun and interactive way, I learned more from that one class we had then half my lectures if I hadn’t studied. Making learning fun increases likelihood of people remembering and enjoying the course they take. Majorly helps with the usual learning high intensity vetmed stress too

- There should be one every semester, at least!
Vets at Play

Only with ZOMBEGONE
References

• Bekoff (1984) Social Play Behavior, Bioscience 34(4), 228-233
• VetFutures Report (2016), VetFutures Action Group