

Gupta Simulation – Introduction.

Materials:

- Packet for each participant
- Secret knowledge for each group
- Worksheet for each group (designate a recorder)
- Sign with the name of each group
- Time keeping device

How it works. The way I usually lead this event (with students, K-12 teachers, or college teachers) is, as follows:

- 1) I have the group sound off in sequence, numbers 1 through 8. I move all the "1's" to one location, the "2's" to another, and so on. [3 minutes] *Every person gets a packet with: Public Knowledge, 2 short background pieces for their specific group, and a map. Each group gets a worksheet.*
- 2) Next, they have 10 minutes to read the public knowledge and the background material and look at the map. During the 10 minutes I go around and give out the "secret" information to each of the groups. The basic point is for each group to figure out
 - a. what they want,
 - b. what they have to offer and
 - c. with whom they need to negotiate. [10 minutes]
- 3) Next comes the first round of "speed negotiation". At a signal, each group holds up a sign designating who they are. Each group that wants to negotiate sends a representative to the group of their choice. The first representative who arrives gets to negotiate with the target group. However, the targeted group can choose to negotiate with two groups simultaneously if they think that they can handle it. This "speed negotiation" stops with a signal after three minutes. [3 minutes]
- 4) Next, the representative returns to the group and reports what happened. The groups get five minutes to discuss what their representative learned and strategize who they should talk to next and what they will propose. [5 minutes]
- 5) "Speed negotiation" II is just like the first one. Alliances will form and plots will hatch. [3 minutes]
- 6) Another five minutes of discussion and strategy in the home group. [5 minutes]
- 7) "Speed negotiation" III should be more frantic and devious. [3 minutes]

At any time during these sessions, groups can request an audience with the King. He may or may not grant the audience. The King may also command a group to come to him. Of course, everyone may lie.

The teacher's main function is to help groups that are not negotiating to understand their assets and develop strategies to achieve their

goals. They must act or they will be marginalized. Keep the time and don't let discussion lag or groups loose focus.

8) By this time most groups have formed into coalitions. It is up to the coalitions to write their advice to the King (see the worksheets). This usually takes a few more minutes as members of the coalitions realized that they are not going to get everything they want. There may be double crosses. [7 minutes]

10) The coalitions present their solution to the King and he and his advisors announce to the public what they are going to do. [6 minutes]

I have run the whole simulation in just under an hour, though it takes steady pressure from the leader to do it. I have also done it over two days with unlimited email allowed overnight. This yields interesting results.

There are, by design, no "right" solutions. There are a myriad of outcomes, all relatively plausible to the period and place. I have had wonderful and creative solutions, including assassinations, coups, non-violent sit-ins, kidnappings, marriages, bribery and expulsions.

Concluding discussion: I usually have a "debriefing" on the game. At its simplest, I ask what they would do differently knowing what they know now. I usually lead the discussion around to how folks in ancient times did not lead simple lives; they had crosscutting pressures and needs, much as we do. We also talk about the importance of information and networks necessary to share it.