

Failure time activities

Failure is important for everyone to experience. These activities have been trialled by AIME in their Mentorclass workshops, and now it is time for you to use them in your learning environment!

Alphabet Scene

What do you need to play this game?

This game can be played with up to 26 participants, but it works best with smaller groups. You'll need two people to quickly set a scene and a problem in 1-2 sentences.

Instructions

To begin, establish an order for participants to speak in. You can do this by giving each person a number. The first player must start their sentence with the first letter of the alphabet. The next person's sentence begins with the next letter, and so on. When everyone has had a turn, it loops back to the first person and continues until you reach Z. The scene ends when the final person completes their sentence with the letter Z.

Example

Scene: Camping, but you've forgotten to pack food

Person 1: "ADAM! We forgot to pack the mushrooms"

Person 2: "But I swear I packed them, what can we have instead?"

Person 3: "Cant have anything, not only did we forget mushrooms, we forgot to pack any food at all!"

Person 1: "Don't joke about this Katie, we kind of need food to survive"

Person 2: "Excuse me but Katies not joking.... theres no food here at all..."

Why is this failure time good?

This game encourages participants to step outside their comfort zones while creatively collaborating on a story. It helps develop confidence, narrative skills, and teamwork in a fun and supportive setting.



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Art by 5

What do you need to play this game?

This game works for both small and large groups. You'll need pens and paper.

Instructions

Before starting, explain that participants will have one minute to complete each drawing challenge, with a fun twist in each round. Choose a simple object or scene to draw, such as a cat or house. In the first round, everyone uses their dominant hand. In the second round, they switch to their non-dominant hand. The third round involves drawing with the paper upside down. In the fourth round, participants draw with their eyes closed. The final round requires them to draw without lifting their pen off the paper. After each round, have everyone show their artwork and pick the most creative drawing, focusing on fun rather than perfection!

Example

Draw A Cat!

Round 1: Used my right hand

Round 2: Used my left hand

Round 3: Turn the page upside down, and start with the ears at the bottom of the page, so when you turn it right-side up, the cat will be right-side up too

Round 4: No peeking!

Round 5: As soon as you lift your pen off the page you must stop drawing!

Why is this failure time good?

Each round gets progressively harder, encouraging participants to reflect on their efforts and contributions. It's a fun way to challenge creativity while building confidence in a supportive environment.



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Air-Band

What do you need to play this game?

This game works best with 2-6 participants. You'll need air guitars, imaginary drums, muted mics, and any other invisible instruments you can think of.

Instructions

Start by selecting a song and identifying the instruments used in it. Once the group is formed, play the chosen song and have each participant pick which invisible instrument they'd like to "perform" during the airband. After roles are assigned, play the song again to let the group practice their air performances. When everyone is ready, play the song one more time and let the group perform as a full airband!

Example

Song: Enter Sandman by Metallica

- Person 1: Air guitar/bass
- Person 2: Drum cymbals
- Person 3: Electric air guitar
- Person 4: Drums, enters after intro
- Person 5: Vocals, enters after full intro

Why is this failure time good?

This activity encourages creative freedom while challenging participants to find and follow the rhythm of a song. It's a fun team-building exercise that could even lead to a full airband "concert" performance!



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Black Magic Riddle

What do you need to play this game?

This game works best with 6-8 participants but can include as many people as you'd like! It requires a curious mindset and the ability to ask questions.

Instructions

In "Black Magic," the goal is for players to figure out the hidden rule that determines why an object is considered "Black Magic." The game begins with the Host pointing to an object and saying, "This is not Black Magic," which starts the game. Players then take turns pointing to different objects and asking, "Is this Black Magic?" The Host answers based on the secret rule, either confirming or denying whether the object is "Black Magic." The game continues until a player correctly deduces the rule or the timer runs out.

Example

The Black Magic Riddle Condition:

For the object to be "Black Magic", the previous object must be black in colour

Host: *Points to black jumper* "This hoodie is not black magic"

Person 1: *Points to brown table* "Is this Black Magic?"

Host: "That IS Black Magic"

Person 2: *Points to a pink drink bottle* "Is this Black Magic?"

Host: "That is NOT Black Magic"

Why is this failure time good?

This game helps participants build confidence by encouraging them to ask questions and work through the challenge of figuring out a riddle. It fosters curiosity and reduces the fear of making mistakes in front of others.



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Creature It

What do you need to play this game?

This game works best with 6-8 participants but can include as many people as you'd like. You'll need plenty of curiosity and a willingness to ask questions.

Instructions

In this game, the group will work together to create a creature, adding one body part or feature at a time. The host holds the pen and paper, guiding the process by asking players questions. Each participant takes a turn suggesting a new feature for the creature. The creature can include anything from body parts to clothing, hairstyles, or even tattoos. The game ends once the creature is complete or when time runs out.

Example

Host: "Lets make a Huggable Creature"

Person 1: "Okay so it has like 1000 arms so it can hug lots of people at once"

Person 2: "Ohhh and make them super long like MR so it can do massive group hugs too"

Person 3: "Surely it has to be warm and fuzzy, so soft hair all over its body"

Person 4: "She could be a mum? My mum gives the best hugs"

Host: "Whats the best way to show that she's a mum?"

Why is this failure time good?

This creative team-building activity encourages listening, asking questions, and building on others' ideas. It fosters imagination, collaboration, and helps participants work together to create something fun and unique.



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Guess Who

What do you need to play this game?

This game works best with 16 to 25 participants. You'll also need a positive attitude and kindness toward others.

Instructions

This is a one-sided version of "Guess Who!" Start by choosing a host, who will secretly pick one player from the group. Then, select a guesser, whose job is to ask the host a series of yes/no questions to figure out who the secret player is. The guesser has three chances to guess correctly. The game ends when the guesser either runs out of guesses or identifies the correct player.

Example

Host: Okay! I've Picked someone!

Guesser: Is that person wearing glasses?

Host: No! They are not wearing glasses!

Guesser: All people wearing glasses sit down.

Why is this failure time good?

This game helps participants develop the ability to ask thoughtful questions and boosts their confidence in a group setting. It encourages critical thinking and active listening, all while keeping the atmosphere fun and engaging.



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It's My Party

What do you need to play this game?

This game works best with 6-8 participants, but more players can join if needed! It's ideal for students who enjoy finding patterns.

Instructions

The goal of the game is for players to figure out the hidden rule for what can be brought to the party. One person is chosen to host the party, and the host secretly creates the rule (but doesn't tell anyone). The host begins the game by saying, "I'm having a party, and I want a [insert object that follows the rule]." The other players then take turns asking, "If I bring a [insert object], can I come to your party?" The host will respond with either "yes" or "no," based on whether the object fits the rule. The game continues until someone figures out the rule or the timer runs out.

Example

Rule: The object must contain a double letter that the last object began with

Host: "I'm having a party and I want a pool"

Person 1: "If I bring an apple, can I come to your party?"

Host: "Yes you can!"

Person 2: "If I bring an otter, can I come to your party?"

Host: "No you can't"

Why is this failure time good?

Hosting this game helps participants develop leadership skills, focus, and attention to detail. It encourages them to ask questions in a fun, engaging way, while also building confidence and reducing the fear of making mistakes.



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Movie Changers

What do you need to play this game?

This game works best with 6-8 participants, but you can include more by placing them into pairs. You'll also need a short video or scene from a movie.

Instructions

Start by watching the video clip to establish the scenario. Then, pair up the players and assign each pair different characters to act out the scene. Give each pair a few minutes to quickly practice their roles. Once ready, set the stage and let them perform! The game ends once all pairs have had the chance to act out their version of the scene.

Example

Romeo and Juliet:

Juliet: O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo? Deny thy father and refuse thy name. If thou wilt not, be but sworn my love, And I'll no longer be a Capulet. Romeo: (aside) Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

Pair One: Shrek and Fiona

Person 1: Charming, Charming! Where are you my prince Charming? Surely you would come to find me? And break the curse that layeth upon me?

Person 2: Sooo should I tell her I'm an Ogre... orrrr?

Why is this failure time good?

This activity encourages participants to collaborate creatively and think outside the box. It challenges them to approach familiar scenes with a fresh perspective and problem-solve when something feels "off." The game also helps build confidence while making participation fun and low-pressure.



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Questions Only

What do you need to play this game?

This game works best with 4-8 participants. You'll need quick thinking and creative thinking skills.

Instructions

The rule of the game is simple: act out a scene, but participants can only speak in the form of questions. Set the stage by establishing a scenario, and have two people begin acting it out. When a player can't think of a question or accidentally makes a statement, they are replaced by a new player. The game continues until it becomes too difficult or the timer runs out. Multiple scenes can be played for added fun.

Example

Scene: You're on a date at a restaurant

Person 1: "So, come here often?"

Person 2: "Is that the best line you've got?"

Person 1: "Got any better?"

Person 2: "If I had any better, would I actually be here?"

Why is this failure time good?

This game pushes participants to think creatively and adapt quickly, challenging them to converse entirely through questions. It encourages confidence in environments where asking questions may not come naturally, helping participants overcome any hesitation or fear of speaking up.



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Shapes

What do you need to play this game?

This game works best with 4-8 participants, but more can join if needed. You'll need a piece of paper and a pair of scissors.

Instructions

The goal of the game is to give meaning to a shape. Each player cuts out a shape (all the same or different, depending on your preference). Players can use either the shape itself or the negative space left in the paper. One by one, players use their shape to act out a single-sentence character scene. The game continues until the timer runs out or players run out of ideas.

Example

Shape: Circle

Person 1: *Holds over one eye* "Arrrr Me-Hearties"

Person 2: *Folds in half, holds over lips* "Quack Quack"

Person 3: *Turns sideways, holds on cheek* "Oh stop it! You're making me blush"

Person 4: *Holds Over Nose* "Rudolph the Rednose reindeer, had a very shiny nose"

Person 5: *Puts it on arm* "Doc, I think I gotta case of the spots"

Why is this failure time good?

This game encourages participants to get creative with seemingly "limited" resources. It helps build confidence, fostering an environment where participants feel free to express themselves without worrying about making mistakes or feeling embarrassed.



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Skribbl.io

What do you need to play this game?

This game works best with up to 12 participants. You'll need a laptop or tablet with internet access to play at [Skribbl.io](https://skribbl.io).

Instructions

Skribbl.io is a free multiplayer drawing and guessing game. Each game consists of several rounds, where one player draws a word while the others try to guess it to earn points. The player with the most points at the end of the game is crowned the winner.

When it's your turn to draw, you'll choose a word from three options and have 80 seconds to draw it. When someone else is drawing, type your guesses into the chat. The faster you guess correctly, the more points you earn!

Why is this failure time good?

This game encourages participants to be creative and resourceful while drawing and guessing. It helps build confidence, as the focus is on fun and participation rather than perfection, fostering an environment where students feel comfortable joining in without shame.



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True Moon Riddle

What do you need to play this game?

This game works best with 6-8 participants, but it can be played with as many people as you'd like. You'll need pencils, pens, or crayons.

Instructions

Start by establishing the speaking order, which is easiest if players are sitting in a circle. The first player describes "Their Moon" while pretending to draw it in the air using the pencil. Once they finish, they say, "And that's a True Moon." The host then determines whether their moon is a "True Moon" based on the secret rule of the riddle. The pencil is passed to the next player, and they attempt the riddle. The game continues until a player figures out the secret condition for a "True Moon," or when the timer runs out.

Example

True Moon Riddle Condition: For a moon to be "True," the player must say "Thank you" when receiving the pencil.

- Person 1: "My moon dances with the tides and loves marshmallows. And that's a True Moon."
- Host: "That is NOT a True Moon."
- Person 2: "Thanks. My moon is yellow and made of lemon tart. And that's a True Moon."
- Host: "That IS a True Moon."
- Person 3: "My moon is a floating space cow... a MOOn. And that's a True Moon."

Why is this failure time good?

This activity encourages imagination as participants create their own moons while trying to solve the riddle. Participants build confidence by pushing past any fear of getting it "wrong" and focusing on fun and creativity.



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