Chocolates, Vanillas, Strawberries, and Orwell: An *Animal Farm* Physical Simulation

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Chocolates, Vanillas, Strawberries, and Orwell:
An <u>Animal Farm</u> Physical Simulation

Grade Level: Seventh Grade

CFSD Curriculum: George Orwell's <u>Animal Farm</u> is one of the novels selected for Seventh Grade Writing and Literature classes.

Lesson Objectives:
1. Following the simulation, students will be able to express, orally and in writing, their feelings and emotions as participants in an unfair and unequal system.

2. Using behavior-over-time graphs, students will be able to graph the changes over time in both the <u>Animal Farm</u> and "Chocolate" systems and will be able to make oral and/or written connections between the novel and the simulation.

3. After reading the text, the students, through oral and written expression, will connect the events of the novel to the Success to the Successful archetype.

Activities at a Glance:
1. The students, in prearranged groups, build windmills. They may only use the supplies given to them. The groups will have unequal amounts of supplies. The students build their windmills with the supplies given to them, as the teacher monitors behaviors, actions, and comments. Students should become upset as they notice the unfair nature of this system. This lasts one 45 minute class period.

2. Following the simulation, the students write their emotional responses to the simulation in their journals. After a short discussion, the students graph, using BOTGs, the different physical and emotional changes that occurred over the course of the simulation. This debrief/processing part of the simulation should last one forty-five minute period. This serves as a set to the novel <u>Animal Farm</u>.

3. Throughout the reading of <u>Animal Farm</u>, the students will be asked to use BOTGs to show patterns and trends of change that occur in the novel.

4. Following the completion of the novel, the students are introduced to the Success to the Successful archetype. Through group work, discussion, and writing, the students make connections, using the archetype, between the events of the novel and historical and current events. This follow-up activity should last two forty-five minute class periods.

5. As a final to the unit, the students will write an essay connecting the events of the novel to the simulation, the archetype, and the BOTGs.

Time Allotment: The simulation will take two forty-five minute class periods (one Writing/Literature block). The first period will be the actual simulation, the second period will be the processing. The simulation should be used as a set, done before the students read the novel. (Due to the tendency for high emotional responses, it is important that the debrief take place in the same time block as the simulation.)

The follow-up archetype discussion should take place after the novel has been read. It should take, again, about two forty-five minute class periods.

Integration Areas: This would blend very well with Social Studies. The Russian Revolution, obviously, would be an excellent tie-in, but any study of tyranny and/or inequality would lend itself to this simulation.

Materials needed for the lesson
Materials
- Building supplies: Paper, tape, scissors, staplers, cardboard, ribbon, boxes, glue, paper tubes, poster board, crayons, rubber bands, twist-ties, butcher paper, etc.
- Paper or plastic grocery bags for the supplies
- Students will need journal/notebook paper and a pen/pencil

Media
- overhead transparencies
- overhead pens

Equipment
- overhead projector
- video camera to film simulation (optional)

Preparation
1. The teacher needs to spilt the students into heterogeneous groups, based on class size, that fall into three categories, chocolate, vanilla, and strawberry. For a class size of 25 to 30, six groups were made with two in each category. The teacher should consider the personality and maturity level of these students as he/she splits them into groups. For example, an emotionally disabled student should not be in the Strawberry group, the group that is treated most unfairly. Students who are better equipped to handle stress will best thrive in this group.

2. The desks should be moved into islands, with a back table serving as the "supply store." Tape cards to the desks that list the names of the students in the group.

3. The teacher needs to gather all of the building materials prior to class and have them sorted into bags according to the three categories BEFORE the students arrive.

4. The journal questions to which the students will respond should be written, but concealed, on either the chalkboard or on an overhead transparency.

Background Information
   The teacher should have a working knowledge of BOTGs and the Success to the Successful archetype. Daniel H. Kim's Systems Archetypes, published by Pegasus Communications in 1992, does an excellent job of explaining the archetype.

Activities
The Simulation
1. As the students enter the room, have them find their groups according to the cards taped to the tables. The students, placed in six prearranged groups, will be asked to build a windmill. The teacher will explain that windmills play a pivotal roll in the book Animal Farm. The students will be told that only the best windmill will get full points and that the project is worth fifty points (this grading system is part of the simulation and will not be used to determine any part of the students' actual grades). The students may only use the materials supplied to each group. Stress that the groups cannot share materials. If the students want extra materials, they must send ONE representative to the "store," where that person may request extra supplies from the "store owner" (teacher).

2. The student groups build their windmills. One teacher "mans the store," while the other teacher (systems mentor or parent volunteer) monitors the behaviors, comments, and actions of the students. Two groups are the "have" groups, called the "Chocolates." They will have a surplus of supplies. The teachers will provide these groups extra supplies throughout the simulation. The "medium" two groups, called the "Vanillas" will have some supplies and will at times get extra supplies from the teachers. They will not, however, be given as much as the "Chocolates." The two "have-not" groups, the "Strawberries," will have very little supplies. Their supplies may be given to the "Chocolate" group if they do not use them quickly enough.

3. The teacher should anticipate students to be protesting, stealing from other students, giving up, or bragging as they discover the inequality. After the students have had time to put their resources together, have the students present their windmills to the class as the teacher "grades." It is important that the teacher tells the students their grades in such a fashion that the entire class hears what each group earns. The Chocolates will get an "A," the Strawberries get an "F" and the Vanillas will get a "C," regardless of the windmills' quality. **NOTE***** *The two teachers need to monitor the emotion level through out the simulation. If it looks as though students are getting too upset, the teachers need to use their best judgments and cut short the simulation. The first time I did this simulation, one student started to cry because she thought it was a real grade. Always keep the emotional well-being of the students the first and most important priority.*

4. After explaining to the students that this is not an actual grade, ask the students to take out their journals and respond, in writing, to the following questions.
    1. How did you feel at the beginning of the activity? How did your feelings change during the time of the simulation? Why do you think your feelings changed?
    2. Was this a fair activity? Would you rather be a chocolate, vanilla, or a strawberry? Why?

5. After the students have had time to write, ask some of the students to share their feelings. Encourage many students to share, but make sure to not let this take more than about 15 minutes unless another period is added.

6. Briefly familiarize students with BOTGs if this is a new concept. Brainstorm in groups *concrete* (amount of materials, etc.) and *abstract* (level of frustration, anger, etc.) elements of the system. Have the students graph in their journals the changes over time for one concrete and one abstract element of the simulation.

7. Ask representatives of the different groups, Chocolate, Vanilla, and Strawberry, to draw their graphs on the chalkboard. Have the student explain his/her graph to the class. The graphs should show a pattern—students with fewer resources have greater frustration, anger, etc.

8. After seeing the different graphs on the chalkboard, the students, in groups, will summarize, in writing, the trends found in the different BOTGs. They should see that the Chocolate group is more successful, thus, happier.

9. After a few students share the trends discovered, ask the students to determine the structure of the simulation by seeing the patterns in the trends. What were the rules

of the simulation that the teacher was following? Students should recognize that over time, the Chocolates were given more supplies than they needed, the Vanillas were given barely what they needed, and the Strawberries were given less than they needed. Encourage students to look hard for these same trends as they begin reading Animal Farm.

Reading Animal Farm
During the reading of the novel, have the students use BOTGs to graph the changes and trends which occur over time in the novel. This serves as a catalyst for discussion. Again, look for concrete and abstract trends to graph. Examples include level of fear, frustration of the animals, Napoleon's power, Napoleon's use of force, education, standard of living, ceremony, feelings of pride, etc.

Follow-up Archetype Activity
1. Now that the students have completed Animal Farm, have them return to their original groups (Vanilla, Chocolate, Strawberry) for a follow-up activity. Have the students look at their original BOTGs from the Chocolate simulation (in their journals). Using the same abstract and concrete elements of the system that they graphed earlier, the students should now create BOTGs from the perspective of the pigs, the dogs, and the other animals.

2. Line up the BOTGs on the board. With the evidence in front of them, ask the students which animals from the text most represent the simulation groups. Students will likely say that the Chocolates were the pigs, Vanillas were the dogs, and Strawberries were the rest of the animals.

3. Brainstorm with the students what resources the pigs had which made them successful. Write these on the board as the students name them out. Brainstorm also what elements the other animals lacked (or were denied) which made them less successful. Students will likely come up with power, resources, and education.

4. On the overhead, introduce the students to the Success to the Successful archetype. (see attached) Explain how because the pigs (A) are given more resources, they have a higher likelihood of succeeding than the other animals (B). Answer any student questions.

5. Using the brainstormed topics off the board, assign each group a different element of the system (education, law-making, etc.). Using this element, have the groups draw out the archetype on butcher paper. Tell the groups to be prepared to present their archetypes.

6. Have each group present their archetypes, answering questions from the students and teacher.

7. Ask the students to write a response to the archetypes in their journals. Use this question to get them started:
    How does this archetype apply to what we see in the newspapers, our society, or history?
    Have the students write for five minutes, then call on students randomly to share their answers. Write down key points on the chalkboard. Encourage discussion as the students make connections between the archetype and their lives.

8. For a homework or in-class assignment, ask the students to draft another Success to the Successful archetype, this time plugging in factors from current events or history. As the students work, walk around, answering questions or giving feedback.

Extension

Following this activity, the Success to the Successful archetype will be reintroduced in other units. It will help students understand how the Nazi Party gained power, using Anne Frank's The Diary of a Young Girl as one of the texts. The archetype will also be used to understand discrimination, as the students read Houston's Farewell to Manzanar.

BOTGs will also be used as discussion tools by students as they examine other works of literature. Students will be encouraged, through writing and discussion, to demonstrate how choices made today can result in great changes in the future.

Assessment

The students will be assessed based on their journal entries, their BOTG journal entries, their current events archetype created in the follow-up activity, and class participation (discussion points). In addition to this, the students will be asked, as a final exam for the Animal Farm unit, to write a Connections Essay. In this essay, they must connect the events in Animal Farm with the events of the classroom simulation. In addition to this, they must show how the Success to the Successful archetype was evident in the events of the novel.
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Students will show that they have met the lesson objectives if they are able to defend their points using systems tools. They should show a clear understanding of the main ideas of Orwell's text, as well as a working knowledge of the Success to the Successful archetype.

Sources

The original concept of the "Chocolate" simulation comes from Mary Harding, my former supervisor at Camp Aloma Summer Camp (Prescott, Arizona).

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