

## **Characteristics or Qualities that make this Program or Practice Different or Innovative**

I based my game on Candy Land but made it personal to my institution. I found an artist who was able to make some cartoon-like drawings of a few of our buildings and landmarks and I incorporated these drawings into my board. Although I used my board during safety training, the nice thing about it is its flexibility. The game board can be adapted and used during any type of training session.

I collaborated with our representative from Workers Compensation Fund of Utah and our campus safety specialist to develop questions for the game. They provided me with many true/false and multiple choice questions relating to a wide variety of safety topics that applied to all the different shops in Facilities Management. Each question was written on a card and assigned a point value (1 – 10 points) based on the difficulty of the question. Fun questions were inserted (such as a photo of someone using a 2x4 to prop up a truck that they were working on, instead of true or false, the text just said, “Good or Bad?”). There were also five cards that said, “Lose a turn for unsafe behavior” and had pictures of things like a car hitting a tree.

Our workers compensation representative attended all of our sessions and spoke for about 15 minutes on the topic of reducing workers compensation claims. He also took questions from the audience. This allowed us to have an expert present at the meeting but limited the amount of lecture time. Then, we spent about an hour playing the interactive game.

The rules of the game were simple. Participants were divided into four groups and each group elected a spokesperson. During their turn, each group was given a randomly chosen question. As a group, they could discuss the question among themselves and come up with an answer. The spokesperson would then shout out the answer. If they were right, their game piece would be moved the corresponding number of points. If they were wrong, another team could try and steal the points. This required that all teams pay attention to all questions (and as a result, be exposed to all the question topics).

I had hesitated to put the ‘Lose a Turn’ cards in the mix because I didn’t want there to be any negativity associated with the game. It turned out that they were a major hit. The teams who drew the ‘Lose a Turn’ cards took it all in stride and the other teams laughed a lot when another team drew one.

Using the actual photos of unsafe behavior (e.g. the 2x4 under a car explained above) also gave people a good chuckle. It was fun, unexpected, and kept the mood light.

The teams were more competitive than I ever could have imagined. I believe this competitive spirit was very helpful in engaging people and making it easy for them to pay attention. I placed the game board on an overhead projector so everyone in the room could see it. People were very observant of how many spaces their team’s piece needed to be moved and who was in the lead. It was a great visual aid.

When it was all said and done, what the winning team won was bragging rights. Everyone who played received a first aid kit as a prize. We were all winners because we were all learning.

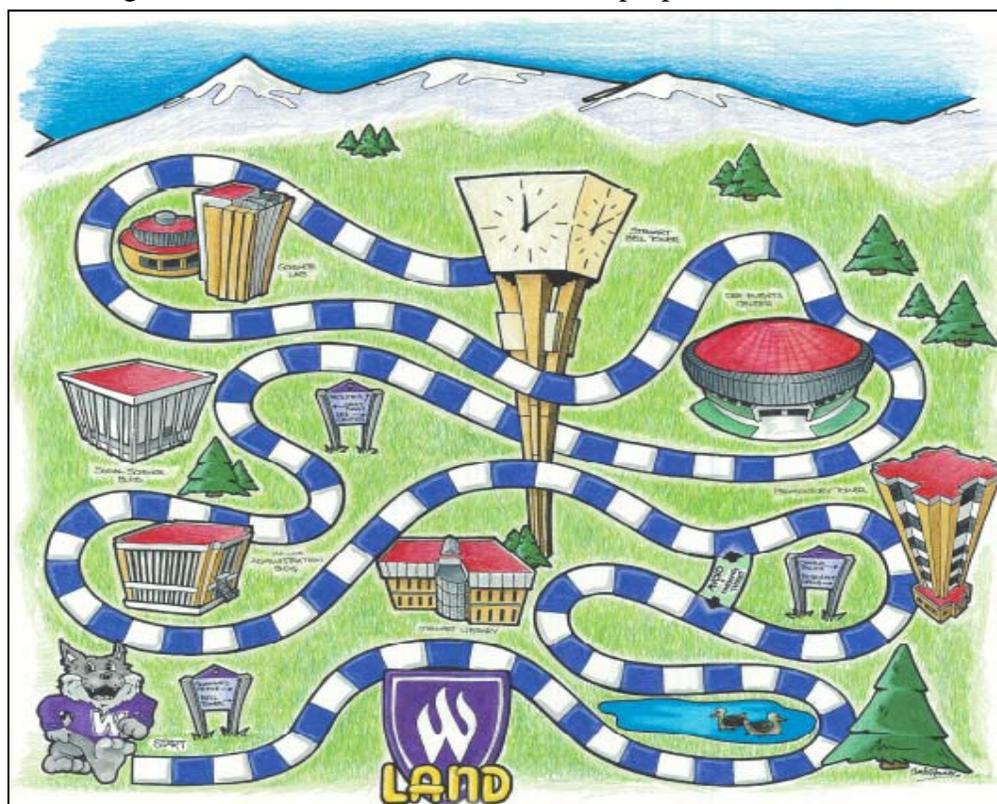
## Brief Statement of Program/Practice and its Results

Every institution requires its employees to attend safety training. No one would argue that it's necessary, important, and beneficial. But, when employees are told it's their turn to attend, more often than not the reaction is accompanied by a groan. Most employees tell me that safety training is boring, that it's hard to sit and listen to someone lecture on one topic for hours at a time. This is especially true considering the fact that most facilities employees are used to being out and about and on their feet and not sitting in an office. Based on feedback I received on previous training sessions, I set a goal to develop an approach to safety training that would be both educational and fun. I wanted to create something that would have our employees asking when it was their chance to go to safety training rather than dreading their turn.

To accomplish my goal, I developed a training approach based on a popular game. Participants would be placed into four groups and the groups would compete against each other. I had hoped that the competition factor would increase participation. My expectations were exceeded beyond belief. The training was wildly successful!

## Institutional Benefits

An obvious institutional benefit was the personalized nature of the game board. It reflected our campus in a positive light and even included our brand new directional signage. It gave the participants something they could easily relate to and identify with. Our mascot served as the starting point and our most recognizable landmark (the bell tower) served as the finishing point. The spaces on the game board were in our school colors: purple and white.



Having a staff that is well-trained in safety and aware of it on a daily basis is also an obvious benefit.

All Facilities Management employees were exposed to a wide-variety of safety topics. These topics ranged from lockout/tagout to properly storing cleaning chemicals. It was designed to give all employees a broad overview of the important safety topics facing the facilities industry as a whole.

It allowed an interaction between Facilities Management and the Workers Compensation Fund of Utah as well as the campus Environmental Health and Safety Office. Our collaboration on this project substantially improved our working relationship.

## **Demonstration of Management Involvement and Employee Commitment**

### Management Involvement

To address the topic of management involvement, the following paragraph was written by my manager, Kevin Hansen (Associate Vice President for Facilities and Campus Planning):

*Safety training is necessary, valuable, and most often boring. The dry lecture or outdated safety film that numbs the mind and does not stimulate interaction or thinking on the part of the trainee is the norm. Such is not the case at Weber State University. Shawna Rowley found a way to make safety training fun, interactive, competitive, and collaborative. Her safety game got people talking, laughing, thinking, and collaborating in a fun, non-threatening competitive environment so everyone was engaged. The safety questions to be answered covered every craft and circumstance, so all were benefited by every answer, and all who attended came away enlightened. And did I say it was fun! Shawna followed one of the management philosophies we espouse at Weber State Facilities Management, best captured in a quote from General George S. Patton: "Never tell people how to do things, tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity." As the executive over Facilities Management, Shawna captured everything I am encouraging in every employee. She then took it to a much higher level.*

### Employee Commitment

Employees were generally receptive of the idea for this training. We've hosted three of these safety-related training sessions so far. We have approximately 250 employees in Facilities Management at Weber State and about 180 of them attended one of those three sessions. Since the last session, I've had countless people ask me when I'm going to schedule another session. People who weren't able to attend one of those sessions have heard others talking about it and are wondering when they'll get a chance to play!

As I stood by the door during each session, handing out first aid kits and thanking people for attending, I heard many positive comments from the participants. One person even left a voice mail message for me during the time it took me to get from the training session to my office. He said he enjoyed the "very, very good" meeting and just wanted to thank me for hosting it. Other comments I received are listed below:

- "I have to be honest; I went to the meeting last Friday with a bad attitude – all the usual stuff about more things to do than time to do them. The meeting proved worthwhile, however, and I appreciate your efforts in putting it together and carrying it off (and for turning my attitude around.)"
- "I thought the game was fun, it was a good way to cover lots of safety rules that we tend to just take for granted, and may even forget. All of us need to be reminded on a regular basis."
- "I learned some new things and I'll admit that's rare for me."
- "Everyone in my area reported that it was one of the better safety meetings because the speaker was brief and hit on important areas. The game was fun and a good thing instead of one speaker talking for the entire time."
- "You guys kept it light and free flowing. I had a good time."
- "I liked the training. It was a good and fun reminder."
- "The game was a fun way to go over safety rules."
- "It's always good to keep safety as a reminder. I liked your class participation game."

## **How this Practice Can be Used by Others**

### Adaptability

This concept is an easy one to adapt for any business. I happened to have access to an artist who could draw my game board but one could also use an aerial photo, a map, or clip art. And if someone were to take the time to create a personalized game board like I did, then it's nice to know that the game board can be used for an endless number of situations. Institutions of higher education are fortunate because we generally have access to many art students who would welcome the opportunity to make a little bit of money drawing cartoons. It's inexpensive to create, yet makes an amazing impact. Every time I revealed the game board, people made comments about how cool it was and many asked if they could have a copy of it.

I happened to use the game board with safety-related questions, but it would be very easy to adapt the game board to any topic that needed to be reviewed.

It is also very adaptable to any size of group. I've used it with groups as small as 12 and as large as 85. The size of the groups had very little impact on how the game play went. No matter the size of the group, we just took the total number of people and divided them into four teams.

I've been thinking of other ways this concept could be made into a game board. One could get a poster of a race track or road and "race" Hot Wheels cars around it. Or, you could get a picture of a football field and move people in one yard increments. Really, the possibilities are only limited by one's imagination. I love the idea of someone looking at my game board representing Weber State and then coming up with their own way of adapting the idea to their location. The possibilities are really endless.

### Portability

I have the original game board drawing and a digital version. I can take the drawing anywhere and show it using a projector or I can print as many copies as I'd like in a variety of sizes. This can literally be used anywhere at any time.

### Sustainability

Once a game board is created, it can be used indefinitely. It is easily updated and the questions can be changed to any topic.

## Documentation of Results, Analysis, Customer Feedback, and Resulting Benchmarks

Employees were asked to complete feedback forms after the training and the results were generally positive. The feedback forms gave us a chance to determine opportunities for improvement. One of the things we learned from the feedback form was that people don't like to have training on Friday afternoon!

I've met with both our representative from Workers Compensation Fund of Utah and our on-campus safety specialist to analyze how the sessions went. Our Workers Compensation Fund representative was very pleased to be asked to speak to our employees. (Many of the feedback forms mentioned that they enjoyed having him there yet also enjoyed that he kept his lecture to a minimum.) Based on the feedback we received, we've determined that we will have the Workers Compensation representative back on campus again to speak to our employees. Employees mentioned that they would like more safety training on workers compensation fraud as well as training on fire extinguishers. Our on-campus safety-specialist has also offered to be more involved in future training sessions.

I believe providing training for our employees, and investing time in them, leads to better customer service. It's like if you take care of your own, then they will take care of the customers. Happy employees are also more productive employees. And those things, along with employees who care about safety, are good for the institution in general.

To end on a fun note, here's an example of one of the silly questions we had during the training session:



Good or Bad?