Yahtzee Activity

CRLA Training Topics Covered:

- Cultural awareness, inter-cultural communication, diversity, and/or special needs students
- How to tutor/deal with target populations
- The role of learning centers in higher education

Learning Objectives:

Students experience positions of both privilege and disadvantage, enabling them to identify privilege and empathize with students of varying backgrounds and educational experiences.

Description of the Activity:

The Yahtzee activity is designed to spark a diversity discussion. Students play a modified game of Yahtzee in groups of 3-4. Each player has a different score card and set of rules that tends to predetermine the winner, loser, and middle person(s). The activity acts as a seed for discussions that can involve a variety of topics surrounding diversity.

Materials needed:

- Five dice per game
- Score cards with attached rules
- Pencil

Directions:

Players take turns rolling the 5 dice. On each turn, the player may roll the dice up to three times to maximize their score for one of the 13 categories. At the end of turn, the player must put their score in one of the categories, or a zero if no category applies.

On your turn, first roll all 5 dice. Set aside any that you’d like to keep. You may take your score now if you wish. Roll the rest of the dice for your second roll. Again, set aside any that you’d like to keep and take your third roll (you may also take your score after the second roll). After the third roll, you must record your score or take a zero in one of the categories.

The game ends when all of the categories have been used. The player with the highest grand total wins. If time allows, participants can switch rules and scorecards to play a second round.
Debrief:

Participants with a set path might experience the following:

- Not having to make decisions can make the game less mentally taxing, but it doesn't usually lead to the best results
- Participants may be more complacent because they don't have to make any decisions
- Participants may be so focused on one score that they don't see other possibilities (even though they can't take advantage of them)
- If participants notice missed possibilities, they may be disappointed
- Other participants may remind them of the missed possibilities
- Participants may not be willing to take a chance because “a little bit is better than nothing”. (e.g. not rerolling for a higher score in fear of rolling a lower number)
- Changing from a set path to having options can be a difficult transition
- Participants may assume a greater disadvantage than they actually have

Participants that can decide their path might experience the following:

- Participants may experience stress about whether or not they made the right decision
- Participants have the luxury of feeling like they have a chance to win versus going through the motions
- Participants may not perceive another player who has a set path as a competitor

Participants with a reduced score sheet might experience the following:

- Participants may get discouraged because their rolls aren't worth as much.
- Participants may feel they don't have a chance

How does this relate to tutoring? This game can be a seed for different discussions:

- How it felt to be on an uneven playing field
- Students may lack outside support from family, friends, or peers
- Hidden struggles – some students may have more obstacles to overcome or different expectations from outside influences
- Transitioning from a set path in life to making adult choices
- Language barriers
- Not understanding the rules (e.g. new students navigating college resources)
- The importance of being aware of and overcoming bias
- Comparing one's abilities and success to others
- Not recognizing others' worth