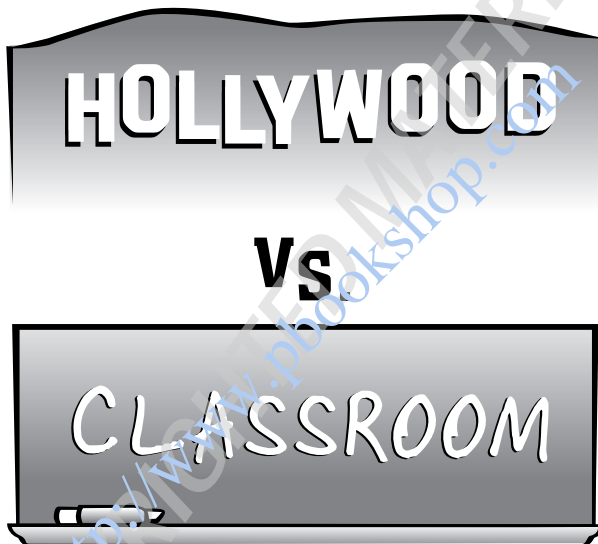


# Chapter 1

## Classroom vs. Hollywood

*How Training Game Shows Differ  
from TV Game Shows*



### **In This Chapter, You Will:**

- See how game shows for training can carry more information and impact than those on TV.
- Learn how and why a classroom game show must be different from a TV game show.

The game shows that we watch on TV are for entertainment—that's why we enjoy them so much. We can share in the glory and the tragedy of the contestants and try to answer questions along with them. However, for *learning* game shows to be effective, they need to be more than just entertaining. The trainer needs to take liberties with the rules and the format. We must emphasize that training game shows have fundamental differences from their television cousins and that these differences are necessary for them to be effective.

### Education vs. Entertainment

While it's fun to watch a game show on TV and you may remember a few of the trivia questions and answers after the show, generally we don't learn anything from watching a television game show. Any knowledge a contestant displays on a game show is viewed as extraordinary or incidental; what is missing is training. On TV there is no time to review an incorrect question, no time to elaborate on material related to an answer, no major topic that content is centered around (instead you have a compilation of random trivia), and no real link to tie the whole fantastic spectacle into real-world applications. So what if another contestant knows that a crampon is a spiked climbing boot. Are you going to remember and apply that after you get home? Not unless you're taking up mountain climbing. A classroom game show allows you to review, elaborate, correct, and apply your content, as well as place it in a real-world scenario.

### Teams vs. Contestants

Instead of individual contestants playing against each other, training game shows use teams. The idea is to get as many people involved in training as possible. By grouping players together on a team you:

- Increase collaboration and participation.
- Create a bond between trainees and increase the feeling of camaraderie.
- Limit the embarrassment a person may feel answering a question alone because the entire team is responsible for an answer.
- Leave no room for someone to “check out” and hide in the back. Every team member’s contributions are a crucial part of the team effort, and each is held accountable by teammates.
- Give trainees the opportunity to learn from, and to teach, their own peers.

You may also take liberties with the number of teams playing the game. Just because TV’s *Jeopardy!* has three contestants doesn’t mean you have to have three teams; you can have four or five if it suits the size of your training class. While TV’s *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* has just one contestant at a time, you will need to have more than one team for your *Millionaire* game.

Classroom game shows also give you the opportunity to use an audience. In a TV game show, not only is the audience not involved, but they are actively encouraged not to participate, although they are told when to clap politely and when to laugh. In your training game, you can use the audience to increase the energy of a game show by cheering and being part of the teams, giving answers, demonstrating procedures, and contributing to the learning process.

## **Trainer vs. Quizmaster**

Although hosting and keeping the game running smoothly is an important part of a game show, never underestimate the crucial importance of training. We will note the significance of providing

additional background and content before, during, and after a question to increase the amount that trainees learn and absorb. *Your role is not just to facilitate the game show but also to support the contestants and ensure that learning is taking place.* We daresay that your job is a bit more difficult—and has a greater impact—than any commercial game show host who just reads questions and relates whether the answers are correct or incorrect.

### **Encouragement vs. Embarrassment**

While most game shows seek to cheer the winners and soothe the losers, some recent game shows, such as *The Weakest Link*, have been downright nasty to the losers. People learn best in a supportive and nurturing environment. The host-trainer should never insult or tease a trainee in an unpleasant manner. Although there is competition in a learning game show, the focus should be on what was learned, not who won the game. We want students to leave with knowledge above all, not necessarily victory.

### **Function vs. Flair**

If you want to incorporate stage lighting, elaborate costuming, and large prizes into your training session, we're not going to stop you, but we advise you against it in general. A lot of extraneous elements often detract from the main objective: your trainees' learning. In the case of training games, the most memorable items should be the questions and answers, not the music and lights (unless, of course, your training includes lighting or music recognition). Your game show can be spiced up, but don't make it a grand production unless that is specifically its purpose. We say this because a training game show doesn't need all the extras to be effective. A simple setting can provide more opportunities to learn than one would expect.

## Your Rules vs. TV Rules

The great thing about a game show is that it is ultimately flexible. Game shows are just formats to which you add your own content, teams, and rules. There's nothing wrong with revising some (or all) of the rules in a game show providing you specify the rule changes in advance. In fact, TV rules don't always work well in a training scenario or may not be realistic with the size or type of your group. For instance, although TV's *Jeopardy!* requires a contestant to ring in to answer, you may find it more beneficial to alternate which team gets to select a question and give an answer. If a team is far behind halfway through the game, you may have a rule that allows teams to earn extra points by demonstrating a skill. The key is announcing any such rule at the beginning of the game.

## Your Way vs. Their Way

Ultimately the game show is yours. Don't be afraid to change the way the game is played. It is only the tool; you decide the best way to use a tool for it to be effective. For example, in *Wheel of Fortune*, you can require contestants to correctly answer a question prior to guessing a letter. *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* uses only multiple-choice questions, but that doesn't mean that you can't make them open-ended or ask the contestants to perform a physical skill or action. Change the game any way you choose, but keep it relatively simple, and explain the rules to your trainees before they start playing the game.

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As you can see, TV game shows, while an inherently entertaining game show base, need modification before they are brought into a training classroom. Many of these modifications are small, but can make a large difference in how your trainees absorb and retain the game show information (you'll see more about customizing a game show in Chapters Six through Eight). However, the game show base can work wonders in your training session, as you'll see in the next chapter.

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