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| Stage:Walk |  |  In Flux: Version 1 |

This facilitator guide provides step-by-step instructions for running In Flux, including suggested facilitator scripts (italic text) and “Pro Tip” pop-ups, which contain tips for the facilitator to take into consideration as they guide participants through the exercise.

While the facilitator may choose to adapt some of the script language or other execution guidelines depending on personal styles and available resources, we recommend following the guide as closely as possible to ensure that participants receive adequate training on each of the concepts and objectives.

**Exercise Overview**

This practical exercise (PE) draws for the popular card game *Rummy*. However, In Flux adds a second layer to Rummy, which makes the players’ objectives significantly different from (sometimes even at odds with) those of Rummy. The goals of In Flux are to promote sociocultural systems thinking (SCS) skills while engaging in a fun and familiar activity, provide opportunities to practice managing complexity, and to encourage reflective thinking about SCS concepts that are manifested in the game.

***There are three different versions of In Flux. This facilitator guide provides instruction for Version 1.*** These versions allow the facilitator to gradually add learning objectives and increase the level of complexity, providing a scaffolded learning approach where participants can progressively build on what they have learned. In Flux also includes three different, easy-to-implement variations that can be added on to enhance any of the three versions.

We recommend running the group through more than one round of In Flux so that several SCS concepts are covered, and so that participants can have repeated practice with applying SCS thinking skills during game-play.

**Sociocultural Systems Thinking Concepts Addressed**

As participants play the more advanced version of In Flux, they will have more opportunities to experience certain SCS concepts (e.g., more agency as they are given more freedom to change game rules). However, the following concepts are covered in all three versions of the game:

* Multiple players/stakeholders
* Individual and collective goals
* Goal conflict
* Interdependence and interaction
* Second and third order effects
* Dynamic/changing circumstances
* Sensemaking
* Adaptability

By the end of the exercise, participants should be better able to:

1.1. Understand the limitations of linear, reductionistic thinking

2.1. Understand the range and nature of stakeholder groups in SCS

2.2. Understand the structural characteristics of SCS

2.3. Understand the manifestations of SCS structural characteristics

3.4. Interpret the results of interventions and adapt courses of action

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|  | *Preparation* |

This table includes preparatory information for In Flux (Version 1):

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| Recommended number of participants | 3 to 6 |
| Estimated run time  | Approx. 30 to 90 minutes *Note: Run time is highly dependent on how quickly a game ends* |
| Materials needed | In Flux board; 12 Player Profiles; 50 tokens; two standard 52-card decks; Base Rummy Rules sheet*Notes: For a 3-player game, use one card deck. For a 4- to 6-player game, use two card decks.* ***The facilitator should remove all Aces from the decks.*** |

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|  | *Execution Guidelines: Rule review and practice rounds* |

Begin by explaining to participants that the foundation of this game is similar to Rummy. Because it is slightly different, though, you will first review the rules for this version of Rummy (see Attachment A for Base Rummy Rules sheet).

*You will all be participating in a group exercise that involves playing a card game, In Flux, which is similar to Rummy. While some of you may be familiar with Rummy, there are several different versions of the game. For this reason, and for those of you who have never played Rummy, we’re going to start by reviewing rules for the version of Rummy that will serve as the foundation for In Flux.*

*We can refer to the Base Rummy Rules sheet as we review the rules. After reviewing, we’ll play one or two practice rounds of basic Rummy until everyone is comfortable with the game.*

Review the rules with the group using the Base Rummy Rules sheet. Remind everyone that Aces have been removed from the deck to reduce scoring complications. The facilitator may also want to remind everyone that each individual is playing for themselves; there are no pairs or teams.

Next, have the group play a couple of practice rounds – with no Player Profiles – until everyone is comfortable with the rules. If any participants need more practice, the facilitator may consider playing several practice rounds, and/or allowing all players to show their cards during the practice rounds.

Once the players understand the base rules, the facilitator can explain how In Flux differs from Rummy:

*While In Flux is similar to Rummy, there are some important differences. The winner of In Flux is not necessarily going to be the person that ends up with the highest number of points. Instead, I will give you each a Player Profile that contains your personal objectives for winning the game. You should not share your Player Profiles with anyone else. Each profile objective has an associated token value. The player that has earned the most tokens at the end of the game is the winner of In Flux.*

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| *Execution Guidelines: Beginning the game* |

To begin the game, give each player a Player Profile (see Attachment B) and place all remaining profiles in the designated spot on the In Flux board (see Attachment C).

The rest of the game set-up is similar to Rummy. Deal each player 7 cards, place the stock in the middle of all players, and discard the top card from the stock, face up. Remember to combine two standard card decks if there are more than three players.

*You can take the next few minutes to look over your Player Profile objectives and the cards in your hand.*

*Once everyone is ready, we’ll start game-play counter-clockwise and continue until the first player goes out. As a reminder, a player must discard in order to go out.*

*Depending on how many rounds this game lasts and how much time we have, I may ask you to keep your tokens, exchange your profiles in for different ones, and play another game.*

While the group is playing, it is the facilitator’s responsibility to keep track of how many rounds have been played. Also note that if the stock runs out before the game ends, use the discard pile to refresh the stock.

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|  | *After the game* |

Once the game ends, ask all players to add up their Rummy scores, and remind them to continue hiding their Player Profiles:

*Please remember to keep your Profile Players hidden at this time.*

*Take the next few minutes to add up your Rummy scores. You may share you score with the group when you’re finished. You may also refer back to the Base Rummy Rules sheet for guidance on how to calculate your score.*

*If two or more of you tie Rummy scores, you are both considered to be the ‘highest scorer.’*

*After you have calculated your Rummy score, calculate the number of tokens that you have earned by adding up the objectives met on your Player Profile.*

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| **Pro Tip** | Ideally, an In Flux game will last long enough for the players to fully experience several SCS concepts (e.g., goal conflict, trade-offs). While it is at the facilitator’s discretion to initiate another game, we suggest having the group play again if the previous game lasts fewer than 5 or 6 rounds.If playing another game, *inform the players that they will keep their profiles and tokens*. Shuffle the cards and deal a new round. Withhold debriefing until the end of the final game.  |

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|  | *Debrief Guide* |

The debrief discussion is essential for this abstract exercise to have impact. It is split into two parts. ***If the group is playing Version 1 again, the facilitator should only run through Part 1 after the game. If the group is ready to move onto Version 2, the facilitator should run through the complete debrief (Parts 1 and 2).***

Begin by having players state their overall point scores and token scores. Declare the In Flux winner - the player(s) with the most tokens. To facilitate discussion, record scores and comments made during the debrief discussion on a board.

**Part 1**

Start by having players guess what the other players’ profile objectives were, based on their observations during the game. We recommend having everyone guess one player’s profile objectives at a time:

* What did everyone think Joe’s objectives were?
* What observations made you think he had that objective?
* Could that observation indicate anything else?
* Did your assessment of his objectives change over the course of the game? If yes, What did you see that changed your assessment?
* If players have been writing down their assessments throughout the game (Variation 1), reference those and how they may have changed over the course of the game.

**Part 2**

Next, introduce the following questions.

* How was your experience in the game?
* (If more than one game was played) What did you learn in the second/third game that you did not realize in the first game?
* How did your strategy change during the game? Why did it change?
* What were your biggest frustrations in the game?
* Was it hard to accept that getting the highest score was not enough to win?
* Did you have to adjust your strategy as the game changed?
* Was it frustrating having minimal control over your goals?
* What did you have trouble keeping track of?
* Keeping track of your progress toward each goal?
* Keeping track of what cards other players might have?
* Trying to figure out what other people’s goals were?
* What assumptions did you make that were wrong?
* Did you assume you knew what cards the other players had?
* Did you assume you knew what other players’ goals were?
* Did you assume that other players’ profiles were similar to yours in some way?
* Was it difficult to address some/all of the goals in your profile? What made it difficult?
* Were some combinations of goals easier or harder to meet?
* What were some of the strategies you came up with to meet your goals?
	+ To work towards only one goal on the profile? All 3? Why?
* How would you play the rounds differently, knowing everything you know now? Specifically, now that you know all of the players’ profiles, how to play the game, how the game turned out, etc.

*Ideally, the group will by now have discussed the following SCS concepts: 1) Conflicting v aligning goals within players, 2) Conflicting v aligning goals between players, 3) Individual v other v collective goals, 4) Trade-offs, 5) Prioritizing goals, 6) Dynamic/changing circumstances, 7) Unexpected disruptions/events (both random and person-initiated), 8) Uncertainty (in regards to other players’ goals, cards, and upcoming events), 9) ambiguity (in terms of not knowing how to attribute other players’ actions – they could be easily misattributed/the meaning behind each action might not be clear), 10) 2nd and 3rd order effects (will my actions still be good choices a few rounds from now), 11) unpredictable (I don’t know what cards I’m going to draw, what other people will draw/do), lack of control (I don’t have 100% control over reaching my goals), 12) being an active agent in the system*

*Other points that may come up:*

* *Players that are already familiar with/good at Rummy: It was hard to let go the biases of Rummy (wanting to just play and win like Rummy). May actually be easier for people who haven’t played Rummy b/c they can just focus on the token goals? This is an interesting concept because it can relate to having biases in the real world, and having a hard time letting them go.*
* *They noticed that some of the goals do align with winning Rummy, while others don’t*
* *Some players may find themselves just focusing on the players sitting directly next to them because of the order of play*
* *Some players may find themselves only focusing on goals that are 1) easier to achieve in the moment and/or 2) worth the most tokens*
* *Some players may find that they ‘let go’ of their player profile goals b/c they are frustrated, or its easier, and they just play Rummy*

Operational questions

* Look at your own profile goals. Can you think of analogous goals from an operational, multicultural mission?

*Participants should come up with examples from deployment where, while they were working towards individual, troop, or Army-wide goals, it also benefitted them to work towards goals for the local government, military, police, people, etc. Or maybe their unit/battalion’s goals were at odds with the goals of the Afghan security forces, for example.*

* What might the tokens represent if this were an actual, operational mission?

*Participants should talk about how different mission goals carry different priorities, and how there may be trade-offs when trying to achieve several different goals at once. It may be difficult or even impossible to achieve all of their goals at once.*

* Now look at your profile as a whole. How could that relate to an actual, operational mission? What about compared to other profiles?

*Participants should talk about how they may have to manage multiple goals at once during a mission– some goals may be conflicting, or they may be aligned with one another. Also, there isn’t always one clear ‘winner’ during a mission, and sometimes the good of the collective (or others) is more important than the good of the individual (or self).*

* When you think of what was challenging in the game, are there similar challenges in multicultural operational missions? Can you think of actual examples?
* What do you think the intent of this game is?
* What are your big takeaways from this game?