Staff Meeting

A Socratic Worldbuilding Game by Michael Purcell

Action Items

During the last round, your job is to decide what you are going to do next. You should describe what you think needs to be done, describe what you can do yourselves, and what you need help with.

As in the previous rounds, you should use Socratic questions to help each other understand what you are proposing and why you think that your proposal describes a reasonable course of action.
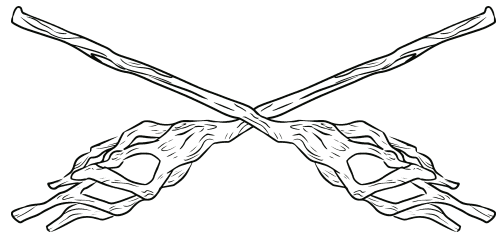
Characters

You will portray a teacher who works at the school. To create your character,

1. Describe the subject that you teach.
2. Describe your mannerisms and physical appearance.
3. Describe two types of questions about staffs that you can answer.
4. Describe one objective that you want to accomplish at the meeting.

Introduce yourself to the other characters before the meeting begins.

Gameplay

The game takes place over a series of five rounds. During each of the first four rounds, you will discuss one topic that the headmaster has identified as being of particular interest. During the last round, you will discuss how to respond to the issues raised in previous rounds.

Topics

The headmaster has identified four topics of particular interest for discussion:

1. Educational Outcomes
2. Safety & Logistics
3. Academic Integrity
4. Equal Opportunity

In each of the first four rounds, you will discuss one of these topics.

Facilitators

One player should act as the facilitator in each round. Their job is to ensure that everyone has a fair chance to contribute and that the discussion stays focused on the topic at hand. In addition to their administrative duties, the facilitator may (and should) contribute to the discussion via their character as usual.

Overview

This is a worldbuilding game. It is intended for groups of three to six players and can be played in about one hour.

You will assume the roles of teachers at a school of witchcraft and wizardry. Your students have recently started using staffs, a new kind of device that changes the ways in which they can interact with magic. You have gathered to discuss the situation and decide how you want to respond.

During the game, you will address a series of questions about how staffs work and how they will affect life at the school. You will invent the answers to these questions as you play. By doing so, you will describe the world in which your characters live, how magic works there, and how it will be affected by this new technology.

Questions

During the game, you will ask and answer questions both about staffs and about the game's setting. You will invent the answers to these questions as they arise to describe the world that your characters inhabit.

Factual Questions

Factual questions are questions about the nature of some part of the game's setting. These questions are usually stated using one of the standard interrogatives: who, what, where, when, why, and how.

Whoever is best suited to answer each factual question should do so. Your answers should be consistent with any details about the setting that have been previously established. Beyond that, however, you are free to invent any details you like as a part of your answers.

Esteemed Colleagues,

As you may be aware, several companies have recently developed magical devices commonly known simply as "staffs". These devices allow their users to cast spells in new and powerful ways. A few pioneering students have already started using staffs. Doubtless, many more will soon follow their example.

So, we should try to understand what the impact of these staffs will be for us here at the school. To that end, you are cordially invited to attend a mandatory meeting tomorrow to discuss the matter. I have identified the following topics as being of particular interest:

1. Educational Outcomes
2. Safety & Logistics
3. Academic Integrity
4. Equal Opportunity

Please familiarize yourself with some aspects of how staffs work and what they can do ahead of time. By sharing our expertise, we can all learn a bit more about this exciting and powerful new technology.

Socratic Questions

Socratic questions are questions that encourage critical thinking. These questions frequently arise as follow-up questions after a player establishes a new detail about the game's setting.

Socratic questions are often intended to do one or more of the following:

- Clarify concepts
- Challenge assumptions
- Probe evidence
- Discover alternative viewpoints
- Explore implications

After someone answers a factual question, you should use Socratic questions to help them flesh out their answer and explain how any new details they introduced interact with other details that had been previously established.