

THE TIMBER GAME: TEACHING SUSTAINABILITY CONCEPTS USING THE PRISONERS DILEMMA

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the development, goals, and administration of the Timber Game. The Timber Game is an online simulation for teaching sustainability concepts in the context of the Tragedy of the Commons. The game presents players with what appears to be a competitive situation but which in reality is a "prisoner's dilemma". Sufficient information is provided for players to identify the prisoner's dilemma and determine the proper course of action in advance. Players who analyze the situation in advance and recognize the meta-level problem, the tragedy of the commons, will adjust their game activities to sustainable levels and maximize their long-run performance. Players who fail to recognize the problem will aggressively compete, undermining the industry and all other players, resulting in depressed long-run industry and organizational performance.