

## Using Colourblind Plus to Refine Communication Skills



### NOTES FOR TEACHERS

Using Colourblind Plus materials to refine communication skills

Whilst the full Colourblind Plus activity is very challenging, and is intended to follow on from Colourblind, we have designed into it materials that can be used to practice the skills that will be needed in either of the full exercises. Supplied in the Colourblind Plus manual are suggestions for a number of shorter, paired activities that can be used to practise giving and receiving instructions. These can be introduced to a group using the same steps as outlined in the full manual.

Using Colourblind Plus to further strengthen individual communication skills.

Colourblind Plus provides an opportunity to rehearse and refine skills. It can be used as a follow-up exercise after a team had completed Colourblind, as the process is similar but the level of precision and detail is great.

If you choose to run this full, more difficult group activity, follow the instructions and run the activity exactly as described in the accompanying notes for adult use. You need to make no changes to the activity process, although you may need to consider the length of time you ask the students to wear blindfolds. Judge this upon their levels of concentration and focus and build in breaks/progress reviews as required.

We do not suggest that you run this activity before you have run the first Colourblind exercise, simply because of the complexity of the shapes and the likelihood of the exercise taking a long time and building high levels of frustration. However, once the original exercise has been completed and learners understand the process, this provides a perfect opportunity to refine their descriptive skills.

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However, within the notes supplied in the Colourblind Plus manual are suggestions for a number of shorter, paired activities that can be used to practice giving and receiving instructions. These can be introduced to a group using the same steps as outlined in the full manual.

These reinforce the learning messages from the original Colourblind exercise:

1. Effective oral communication means that messages are received and understood in the way the speaker intended.
2. To ensure accurate understanding, verbal communication must be clear, precise and specific.
3. Understanding must be confirmed, therefore there must be a means of checking the listener's understanding
4. If a speaker fails to communicate meaning, s/he is responsible for changing the communication until shared meaning is achieved
5. Effective oral communication takes into account the needs and preferences of the listener
6. If oral communication is happening in a group context, it is important to learn how to manage the 'flow' of communication and to be able to intervene and withdraw as appropriate.

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### REVIEW

Suggested questions to use when reviewing Colourblind Plus: a skills focus.

1. How did you attempt to apply the learning from Colourblind in this exercise?
2. How effective was this?
3. What did you notice about the descriptions in this exercise as opposed to the first one? (The shapes are much harder to describe using 'visual' language – they are more abstract, very similar to each other and the descriptions are likely to need more specific detail, such as degrees of angles, length of straight edges etc.)
4. How did you change or improve the descriptions of the shapes that you gave to make sure they were understood?
5. What lessons about managing group communication can you take from your experience of both of these exercises?
6. How do you think this type of communication relates to communicating with others in a workplace or in a meeting?

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### LEARNING SUMMARY

When summarising the learning from the exercise, reinforce the following learning points.

1. Effective communication does not happen by chance: it needs to be structured and managed.
2. Think about three aspects of communication. Each of these is important and each needs to be right to ensure communication is successful.

*The medium. What system are you going to use to communicate? Will this be verbal/face-to-face, written, telephone, email, abbreviated (eg. text, twitter), radio etc?*

*The process. How will the process of communication be managed? Will people contribute in turn? Will it be question and answer? How will quiet people be included?*

*The content or message. What is the content of the message and how should this be worded in order to ensure the meaning is correctly understood?*

3. Recognise that the style of communication is situational. Explore the differences between the formal language you might use in a job interview and the informal language you might use in conversation with your friends.

