EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING



FACILITATOR NOTES

A Free Guide from RSVP Design on using Experiential Learning in Training and Development



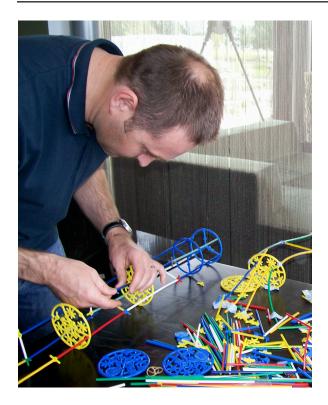


Contents

Introducing Experiential Learning	Page 2
Section 1 : Using Activities to Sensitise Learners to the Learning	Page 4
Section 2 : Using Activities to Introduce Teamwork Principles	Page 13
Section 3 : Using Activities to Develop Specific Skills	Page 15
Section 4 : Choosing Experiential Learning Activities	Page 19
Section 5 : Designing Experiential Learning Activities	Page 20
Section 6 : Reviewing Experiential Learning Activities	Page 21



Suggestions for Using Experiential Learning in Training and Development



What is Experiential Learning?

Experiential Learning is a term that is often used, incorrectly, to describe any kind of learning that involves practical, usually team-based, activities.

"We're going to do some experiential learning - they will be building a spaghetti tower." It might be practical: it isn't necessarily experiential learning.

In the USA, experiential learning is frequently used to describe the prior learning that applicants for academic programmes bring with them from previous work or life experience and for which they might, for example, receive exemption from units of the programme - the 'accreditation of experiential learning.'

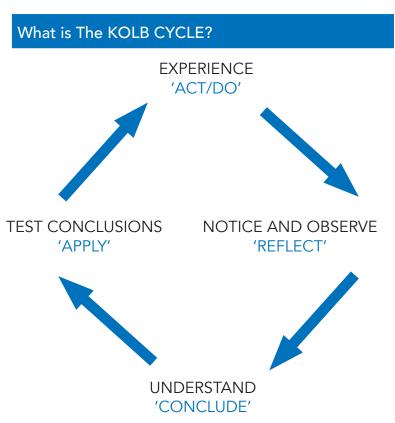
Ar RSVP Design we use the term to refer to a very specific form of learning, which is outlined in the work of David Kolb and best shown illustrated in the 'Kolb Experiential Learning Cycle' in the diagram below. It is a 4-stage process which offers the potential for learning from any experience that happens to us.

How does it work?

Learning happens, both formally and informally when:

- We experience something: we act deliberately or something unplanned happens to us
- 2. We take time to explore our reactions and responses to something that we experience
- 3. We understand what happened and draw conclusions from this
- 4. We adapt or modify future decisions and behaviours as a result of the learning process.

If we fail to complete any of these stages, the likelihood is that any perceived learning is incomplete. We may have 'jumped to conclusions' or we may understand but fail to apply the learning in the future.





Why should we use Experiential and other Learner - Centered Methods?

In this manual, pure 'experiential learning' is supported by ideas and activities from other well-known, participative teaching methods including accelerated learning, problem-based learning and collaborative learning. These can be used, together or alone, to create more interactive, participative and learner-centred learning.

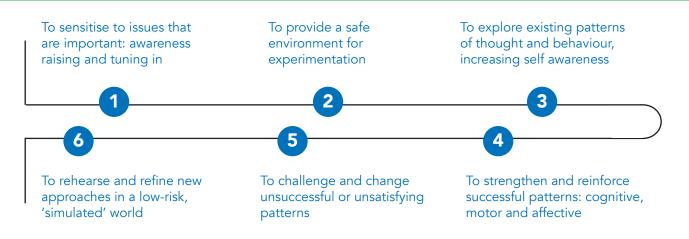
Why do we use Experiential Learning?

- Experiential learning is fundamental to how adults learn.
- Becoming a more skilled 'experiential learner' allows learners to make learning a continuous, lifelong process
- The skills that make us successful in life and employment (personal skills such as our ability to relate to others, communicate effectively, problem-solve, innovate, play our part in teams, influence and resolve conflicts) all benefit from an experiential learning approach
- Learning that people identify for themselves is powerful, memorable and long-lasting

What are the Implications for Educators?

- This type of learning changes the role of the teacher or trainer: we move from being experts who transmit knowledge to a more facilitative role. This means there is a significant change in power in the relationship
- We focus on the skills that enable more independent learning
- We encourage a more learner-centred approach, which means that we must work more flexibly and responsively, adapting our content and process to the needs of the learners and to the things that they identify as relevant
- We focus on developing skills with broad application: metacognitive skills such as 'thinking about thinking', or 'learning about learning'.

Why Specifically, do we use Structured Activities in Experiential Learning?



To take new learning from the training and learning environment into application in the learner's 'real' world



Section 1 : Using Activities to Sensitise Learners to the Learning

Introductory Activities

Introductory activities are sometimes known as 'icebreakers' or 'energisers'.

Whilst there may be rare occasions when doing something simply for fun, or to get people talking, is merited, the successful opening to any training or learning programme is too important to be left to chance.

A well-designed experiential learning activity, clearly linked to the learning objectives for the programme, begins a process of sensitisation and awareness raising and narrows the learners' focus to the subject matter for the session. It should also begin to open discussion and build relationships but in the context of the specific learning outcomes sought.

Key considerations in choosing and using introductory activities is that they:

- Raise energy and focus the learners on the content ahead
- Encourage interaction and collaboration
- Are multi-sensory: they use the visual, auditory and kinaesthetic senses
- Begin a thought process that will be developed during the rest of the training session
- Are inherently interesting and engaging
- Encourage and engage apprehensive participants (rather than embarrassing them or putting them off, which we've seen on too many occasions!)
- Relate directly to the training objectives and are the first steps in achieving them



Above: a simple rope exercise known as 'Handcuffs' enables pairs to work collaboratively, and think creatively - ideal at the start of a training about creative problem-solving techniques. (See p 6-7)

Below: a simple picture grouping exercise begins to develop the skill of 'forcing connections'; vital in innovative thinking. (See p 8)





Section 1 : Using Activities to Sensitise Learners to the Learning

Examples of Introductory Activities for use on Programmes with Different Objectives

Team Building

The purpose of the introductory activity, designed for a new team or group, is:

- To introduce team members to each other and to build connections
- To being a process of collaboration and shared learning that characterises effective teams
- To recognise the different skills and qualities that individuals bring to the team
- To identify similarities and differences, as the first step in identifying potential team roles

So....at a very simple level, we want an introductory exercise that does the following things:

- Introduces team members to each other by name and helps them to remember those names
- 2. Begins to identify different people's skills or experiences and suggest what they might be able to bring to the group
- 3. Starts a process of working together, demonstrating early team cooperation and showing how teamwork can be improved over time
- 4. The 'group introduction' exercise described to the right illustrates a number of stages in an introductory exercise that achieves these aims in a non threatening and engaging way.

NAME GAME: use a juggling ball or bean bag

Form the group into a circle, whether standing or sitting on chairs. Begin by giving the ball to one person. Person 1 passes the ball to the person on their right, saying as s/he does so, "I'm Ann and I'm passing the ball to....."

Person 2 receives the ball and says his/her own name, before passing to the next person.

Once the names have all been said, complete the round again, each person saying the names of the people before and after them in the circle, eg. "I'm Ann, I took the ball from Mohammed and I'm passing it on to David".

Repeat, throwing the ball around the circle at random. Once all the names have been memorised, ask each person to add in something that will help other team members to know more about them. Visual images, alliteration, rhymes etc all help. For example, "I'm Christmas Carol, I was born on December 24th" "I'm Peter - I'm over 6 feet tall - call me "Peter 2metre'

Continue the random ball throwing, but now each person receiving the ball must add some personal information eg. something that makes them unique in this team

Repeat, but this time the person adds something that they feel they can offer the team eg. a personal quality, previous experience, specific expertise or skills.

Move out of the circle, break into trios or small groups and open a discussion around what the team members feel is important about teamwork in general, and more specifically, want they want to experience as a member of this team.

Collate the information, ask for a group member to present it back and you have the basis for your 'contracting' process - the setting of expectations and ground-rules about how the group members want to work together throughout the training programme and beyond.



Section 1 : Using Activities to Sensitise Learners to the Learning

Examples of Introductory Activities for use on Programmes with Different Objectives

Team Building or Training Programmes with Participants who do not know each other

PEOPLE BINGO: an opportunity to get to know people in the group.

There are two different examples

To introduce team members to each other and to build connections, without the exchange of specific, work related information. The purpose of this is to encourage as many meetings as possible and to encourage more reserved people in the group to initiate conversations

To introduce the participants in a way that builds their professional knowledge and suggests the contribution they are likely to be able to make to the team in future.

The People Bingo Task:

Each person is given a pre-printed 'Bingo Card' (such as the ones on the right). Each person should also have a pen.

The task is for every individual to collect a full set of signatures from other people in the group one different signature for each box on the bingo card. A person may only sign the card if the individual concerned can explain how or why this particular item on the card applies to them.

Apply a time limit, to encourage rapid movement and to avoid people getting 'stuck' in a limited number of conversations.

The more the facilitator knows about the team, the more specific and tailored the information on the cards can be.

Plays a musical instrument to a high standard	Is a twin or has twins in the close family	Has completed jury service	Has had more than 10 jobs since school
Has achieved sporting success	ls a vegetarian or vegan	Speaks three or more languages	Has lived on three continents
Has been an official witness to a crime	Does regular voluntary or charity work	Has won a prize in a lottery	Collects something unusual
Has won a prize for talent (not luck!)	Could administer first aid at a real emergency	Knows the Chinese sign for their birth year	Has appeared on national TV or radio
ls an expert on a soap opera	Has made a significant career change	Has studied for exams whilst working full time	Has taken part in a dramatic production

People Bingo: Example 2 - Professional skills or project-related

Has sales experience	Has worked on a similar project	Has a relevant qualification	Has worked for a competitor
ls a member of a relevant professional organisation	Has useful external contacts in a professional network	Has in depth knowledge of a subject related to the task	Has worked on a similar project

(Complete your own relevant examples, making these as specific to the demands of the team's task or project as you can)



Section 1 : Using Activities to Sensitise Learners to the Learning

Examples of Introductory Activities for use on Programmes with Different Objectives

Creative Thinking

The use of a creative thinking activity as an introduction to a training programme or process can be very valuable.

'Warming up' for a learning programme can be helped by including an introductory challenge which asks learners to challenge obvious solutions, reject some of the things they think they know and open their minds to new possibilities.

Learning requires the ability to think differently, to leave behind some old assumptions and to look for new ways of doing something.

The exercises here can all be used as introductions to any learning programme but they add specific value to training that focuses on:

- 1. Creative thinking/problem solving
- 2. Innovation/product development
- 3. Change Management
- 4. Learning to Learn

Each of the activities illustrated here encourages an awareness of the importance of :

- Questioning perceptions
- Challenging assumptions
- Exploring multiple possibilities
- Integrating new ideas into old patterns

HANDCUFFS: use two short ropes with a wrist loop tied at each end.

Two people face each other. One person puts their wrists through the two holes in the ends of the hand-cuffs so that the arms are joined by the rope. S/he then holds the rope horizontal, by holding arms up, shoulder width apart. (See images on next page.)

The second person takes the second handcuff and drops one end behind the partner's rope before putting his/her hands through the holes. The two people are then in a position of being connected by the ropes.

Without taking their hands from the holes in the handcuffs, can they free themselves so that each person is free of the other and still wearing the handcuffs?

Clue: The clue is in the use of the internal space! (See solutions on next page.)

Allow the pairs time to experiment - expect to see them trying to step over ropes, climb over each other or rotate themselves in an attempt to free the ropes.

If no-one solves the puzzle, stop them and ask them to think about the REAL problem. How do I move my rope from behind, to in front of, my partner's rope?

Once one or two groups have found the solution, ask them to teach others. If no-one solves it, provide the solution to one group, allow them to practise and then ask them to transfer their learning to other pairs.

This activity (8 x sets of handcuffs) is provided within the RSVP Design Breakthrough Thinking Workshop see http://rsvpdesign.co.uk for details.



Section 1 : Using Activities to Sensitise Learners to the Learning

HANDCUFFS: Pictures of the activity and solution

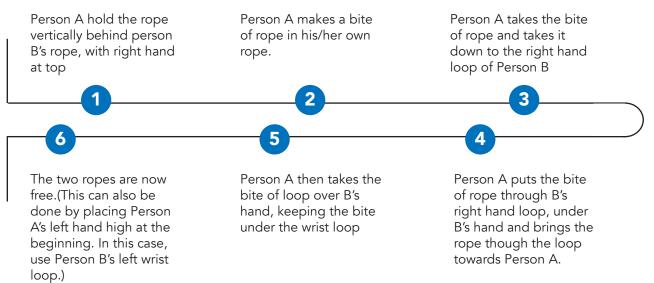








Solution





Section 1 : Using Activities to Sensitise Learners to the Learning

HANDCUFFS: Pictures of the activity and solution

Instructions for successfully separating the two partners in the 'Handcuffs' exercise from the RSVP Design Innovation Toolbox

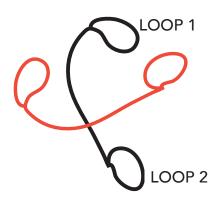


Figure 1: Set up the two cords as above. The cord coloured black belongs to the 'working partner'. The right hand is through Loop 1 and the left hand through Loop 2

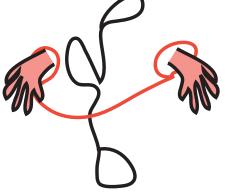
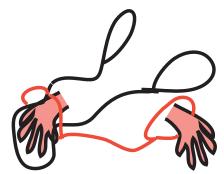
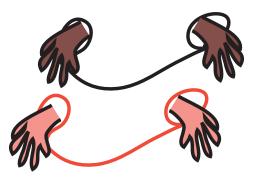


Figure 2: The 'working parner' reaches over the other partner's cord and makes a 'bite' (unclosed loop) in his/her own cord ENS W

Figure 3: the 'working partner' takes the bite in his/her own cord and passes it through the other partner's right wrist loop, towards the fingers



Figures 4 and 5: the 'working partner' passes the loop of his/her own cord over the other partner's fingers, then draws it back to release the cord. The two cords should separate easily.



©RSVP Design Ltd



Section 1 : Using Activities to Sensitise Learners to the Learning

CREATIVE THINKING: Making Novel Connections

Take a pack of assorted picture cards and select a number of cards that is divisible by 4 (we suggest 32 - 48 pictures).

Lay the cards out on the table and ask the learners to sort them into groups of 4. Each group of 4 must have something that connects all of the cards eg. all animals.

The task is easy to begin with but becomes more difficult as fewer cards remain. It may be necessary to break existing groups in order to fit new images into sets.

Insist that the groups members 'force' all cards into groups

Emphasise that you are looking for a common theme or idea that connects all of the cards - you do not want a 'story' in which the cards appear in sequence (eg. "I put on my hat, collected my torch and went to stand under a tree..." is not acceptable!

Encourage unusual or interesting connections ("All of these objects appear in the titles of songs by The Beatles" was one of our favourites!)

3

Explain that finding novel connections is a key skill in innovative thinking.

Encourage the learners to see the images in different ways: eg. can you see the connection between the image sets on the right side of this page?

You can use any set of images of your choice. However, you may wish to use professionally prepared pictures.

This activity (Innovation Images) is provided within the RSVP Design Breakthrough Thinking Workshop.

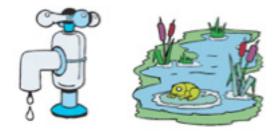
Alternatively, you could use the imagery provided in our Express Pack or Dialoogle products, each of which offer a comprehensive range of images for training use.

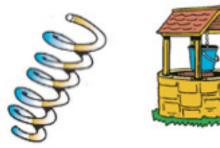
see http://rsvpdesign.co.uk for details.

IMAGE GROUP 1



IMAGE GROUP 2







Section 1 : Using Activities to Sensitise Learners to the Learning

Examples of Introductory Activities for use on Programmes with Different Objectives

3

4

5

Process Improvement

The purpose of the introductory activity is to encourage group members to think about process improvement.

The questions it is designed to raise are questions such as:

- 1. How do we identify what is, and what isn't, working well in any process or system?
- 2. How do we make small changes to a process that will improve the overall performance?
- 3. How do we encourage a contribution from everyone, to ensure that as many possibilities as possible are encouraged?
- 4. At what point do we recognise that small changes will not achieve our objective and that we need to make a significant change in the process or system in order to be successful?

Here are two suggestions for activities that can be used to introduce the idea of 'process improvement'.

- The first activity, ' Group Juggle' is quick and simple to set up, uses easily available resources and can be done in a relatively small space.
- The activity on the next page, 'Keypunch', is a slightly more challenging and active version. It requires more space and is ideally completed outdoors.

GROUP JUGGLE: use a set of juggling ball or bean bags - choose 3-6 depending upon group size.

A series of increasingly complex tasks for the group to work on to improve concentration, co-ordination, communication and the creation of an efficient and workable system to which all members can contribute.

The group begin in a circle, standing approximately 1 metre apart. A series of simple tasks are introduced and developed. The sequence below is a sample: develop your own versions!

Pass one ball around the circle in a clockwise direction. When the first ball is moving well, introduce a second, then third ball. When the three balls are moving well, introduce a change of direction. On the command "Change!" each ball should be thrown in an anti-clockwise direction, changing each time the change command is given.

Move to a more complex pattern of throws eg. build up a repeated sequence of throws across the circle, ensuring that no-one sends the ball back to the person it came from and that everyone is included.

Introduce the "Change!" command once the sequence is established and change the direction of travel. Introduce a second and then third ball as competence improves.

Change the formation of the group from a circle. One example is to have three parallel lines, in which the ball must always pass via the middle line. This means they have to be constantly aware of what is going on in each of the other lines, changing direction to give and receive the ball as they build more complex patterns.

Introduce more balls and more complex tasks as the proficiency of the group improves.

Work with two independent groups, develop a complex pattern in each and then challenge the groups to join together into one larger group, developing an integrated pattern which has elements drawn from each of the small group patterns.

Following the activity, review the ways in which the group moved from inefficiency into high quality performance of a more difficult and complex skill.



Section 1 : Using Activities to Sensitise Learners to the Learning

Examples of Introductory Activities for use on Programmes with Different Objectives

3

Process Improvement

KEYPUNCH - Larger Version

Here is an larger scale version of the same activity. If you are fortunate enough to have access to outdoor space, use it - or use a large conference room or hall.

Instructions:

- Mark out an 'action zone' of approximately 10m x 10 metres. Use a rope or barrier tape, or masking tape on an indoor floor.
- Place 30 numbered markers, distributed at random, within the marked off action zone. For safety reasons, the number markers need to be fixed, or heavy enough that they do not move when touched by hand or foot. *
- 3. Run the exercise with the same briefing as in the indoor version (see right). It is possible to touch the markers with hands or feet.
- 4. Allow thirty minutes of planning and rehearsal time and thirty seconds for completion of the task.

* It is possible to buy coloured marker discs from sports suppliers or to use rubber tiles which can be numbered with a permanent marker.

However, this activity is also available from RSVP Design Ltd and is also one of 30 provided within RSVP Design Teamwork Web

See http://rsvpdesign.co.uk for details.

KEYPUNCH: You need a large space to work in, eg a conference room or training room with plenty of wall space. One rope or length of tape to mark 'action zone', 1 set of 20 laminated numbers

Before the task: Using blu-tac or other non-marking adhesive, attach the 20 numbers at random around the walls of the working room. Use different heights ie. some high, some low. Mark out a square or rectangular area approximately 2 metres in from the walls. The two metre strip around the room is the 'action zone'.

Each participant in the team must start outside the 'action zone'. The task is for the team members to enter the 'action zone' and touch, with their hand, the numbered markers in sequence from 1-20.

The following constraints apply:

- Only one team member may be within the action zone at any one time.
- The numbers must be touched in the correct sequence.
- One person may touch a series of numbers eg 3,4,5,6 without leaving the action zone but must leave the action zone before someone else enters.
- An individual may enter the action zone more than once.

The team will be given a target time to work towards. (20 seconds would be appropriate in most cases)

The team will be given a 20 minute period of planning and rehearsal. During this period they may have as many timed attempts as they choose. At the end of the rehearsal period they will have one timed attempt that will be recorded as their final score.





Section 2 : Using Activities to Introduce Teamwork Principles

Examples of Introductory Activities for use on Teambuilding Programmes

Building Trust

Building trust in a team is essential. Trust tends to be developed slowly but some simple exercises can give people an experience of interdependence and how it feels to rely upon someone else in the team.

These exercises can also be used to explore communication skills and inter-personal support.

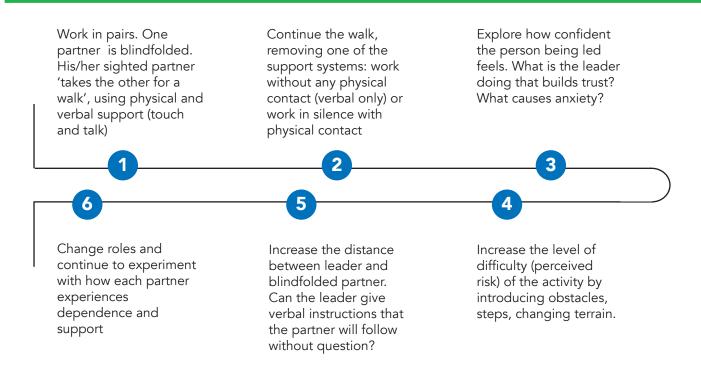
Trust building exercises require agreement from all participants. Many require the 'removal' of one of the physical senses - for example wearing blindfolds, or not being allowed to speak - and this should always be done with the agreement of the participants.

Traditionally, activities such as 'trust falls' - in which one individual falls backwards and is caught by other members of the team - were common. We do not recommend these without specific safety support.

Simple Trust Activities

- Working in pairs develop an increasingly
- complex 'trust walk' see below.
- Work in pairs one person is blindfolded. Introduce a physical skill and allow sighted people to support their partners in achieving it - eg. throwing an object at a target, climbing over an obstacle, putting a golf ball into a hole.
- Use simple countertension and counterbalance activities. eg. A pair stand facing each other, toes touching. Hold your partner by the hands or wrists and, keeping straight legs and arms, lean backwards as far as possible.
- Use a team activity such as Blindfold Squares (see p 12) to encourage teams to introduce basic teamwork concepts of trust, communication, planning and problem-solving

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO DEVELOP AND EXTEND THE TRUST WALK ACTIVITY





Section 2 : Using Activities to Introduce Teamwork Principles

Examples of Introductory Activities for use on Teambuilding Programmes

Introducing Teamwork

A short experiential learning task is an excellent way of sensitising a group to some of the issues surrounding teamwork.

As team members work together to solve a problem, they become aware of issues such as:

- The need to clarify and agree objectives
- The need to give clear and precise instructions
- The need to confirm understanding
- The need to assign roles
- The need to share ideas and concerns
- The need to develop a plan, then test it
- The need to monitor progress
- The need to change the plan as appropriate

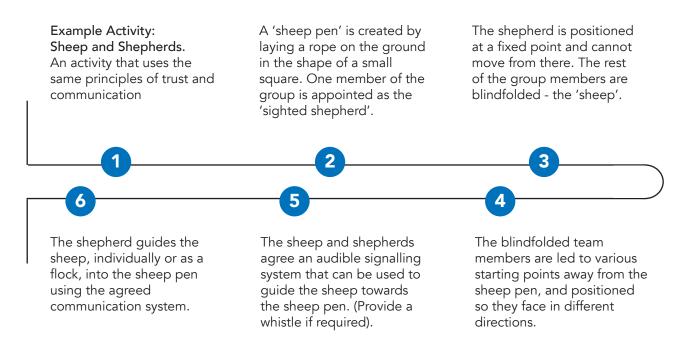
Blindfold Square

Required Materials: Blindfolds for each member of group, one rope

The Task: To form the rope into a complete, accurate square that should be placed on the ground once the team members are confident that it is correct.

- 1. Each member of the participating team is given a blindfold
- 2. Once they have put on the blindfolds, they line up and are given a long rope to hold
- Once they have their hands on the rope they are not allowed to exchange places, although they may slide their hands up and down the rope and move closer together or further apart
- 4. They may communicate verbally throughout the task.
- 5. The completed square is placed on the ground
- 6. Blindfolds are removed and the completed square viewed

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO DEVELOP AND EXTEND THE BLINDFOLD SQUARE





Section 3 : Using Activities to Rehearse and Refine Teamwork Skills

Examples of Simple Activities to Develop Teamworking Skills

Team Problem-Solving Tasks

Giving teams problems to solve together is a regular feature of team-building and team development work. These range from simple 'known problem, known solution' tasks to more complex challenges with a range of possible solutions. As team members attempt to solve problems they demonstrate and observe differences in their behaviours, personal skills and qualities. Recognising these, in yourself and others, is a key part of being able to contribute effectively in a team.

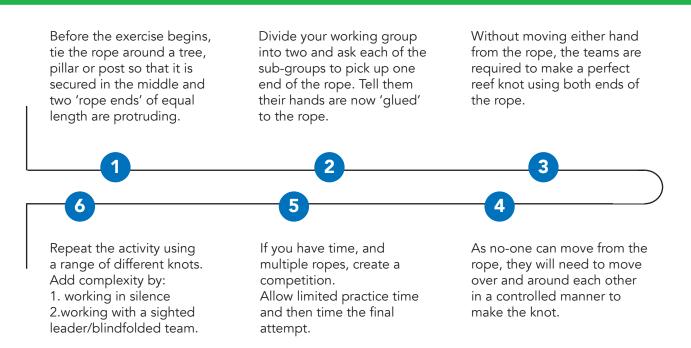
In addition, problems with a range of possible solutions require teams to develop methods of evaluating their options and making decisions. This helps them to focus on team roles, levels of influence and authority or leadership and to understand some of the spoken and unspoken team processes that are in operation.

Why Use These Acivities?

- These activities use 3 key learning methodologies which are successful in adult learning
- They are collaborative: they require team members to cooperate and share ideas
- They are generative: they allow team members to draw upon past knowledge and experience to help them to find solutions to the tasks
- They are problem-based: they require team members to work with a problem that has multiple possible solutions and to create a solution of their own choice

All of these activities are relatively quick, easy to set up and are active. They are particularly appropriate for encouraging younger learners to take an active part in team process.

SUGGESTION 1: REEF KNOT or 'STICKY FINGERS': TIE A PERFECT REEF KNOT

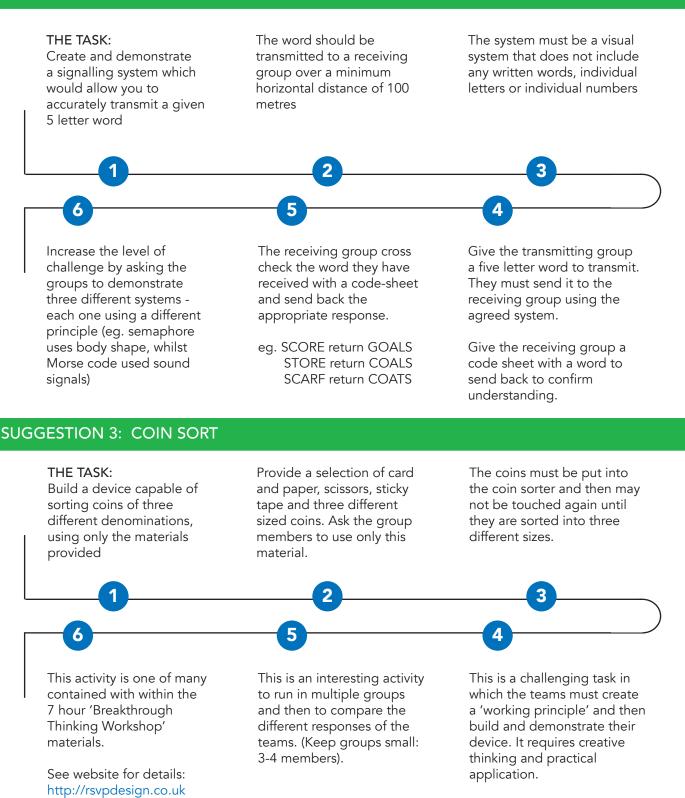




Section 3 : Using Activities to Rehearse and Refine Teamwork Skills

Examples of Simple Activities to Develop Teamworking Skills

SUGGESTION 2: SIGNAL SYSTEMS





Section 3 : Using Activities to Develop Specific Skills

Example 1: Team Communnication and Information Management Skills

2

5

Workstations

Workstations is a classic team communication activity with an added element of critical thinking and information management.

Instructions:

- Use a 5x5 matrix of information: Workstations uses 5 characters, each of whom has a different skill, works in a different building, drives a different vehicle and eats a different type of lunch.
- 2. Individual pieces of information are written upon different cards and distributed between group members. Embedded in the information are two tasks in the form of questions. The group's challenge is to find the answers to the two questions through a process of logic and elimination.
- 3. Group members work together using verbal communication only to find the correct answers to the two tasks.
- 4. The exercise is suitable for groups of 4-8 and usually lasts around 30 minutes.

It is possible to create your own version of this exercise but it needs careful testing to ensure that there are no 'misleading' pieces of information. There are a number of 'public domain' activities ('Who owns the Zebra?' and 'ZIn Obelisk' are relatively well-known ones) similar to this. Any 5 x 5 matrix of information can be used for this task.

However, for a very inexpensive, professionally produced activity, the Workstations activity is available from RSVP Design Ltd

See http://rsvpdesign.co.uk for details.

With careful debriefing, the same activity can be used to address a number of different learning objectives.

These logic puzzles can be used in many different ways:

- To explore how team members set up a process, the roles they fall into and the different types of contribution they make. This is a perfect start to a team development programme.
- To explore the skills of information management: how do they gather the information required, think critically about it, prioritise it and make it memorable and accessible?
- To learn more about the individual preferences in gathering and making sense of the information.
- Some individuals prefer to receive their information visually whilst others prefer auditory input. Some need a kinaesthetic element to help them to 'sort' information.
- The way in which individuals tackle this activity gives insights into how to they prefer to learn and can be used as a useful illustration of learning styles and preferences.
- To rehearse 'chairing skills' the skills needed to manage group discussion or formal meetings. This is an ideal activity to explore the skills of group management and facilitation.
- To rehearse critical thinking skills: to follow a structured process of thinking that requires a hypothesis to be tested and evidence found to prove or refute the idea.





Section 3 : Using Activities to Develop Specific Skills

Example 2: Planning, Creative Problem-solving and Time and Resource

2

3

Straw Bridges

THE TASK:

To design and construct a series of bridges which will span gaps between tables and which will meet specific, and different, criteria. To demonstrate the effectiveness of this bridge system, with no errors, during one test- run at the end of the exercise.

THE MATERIALS:

You have been supplied with construction straws and connectors, a bag of marbles (the test weight) and blu-tac to provide weight and stability.

Structures may be attached to tables for added stability, providing this is done in a way which will not mark or damage the furniture in any way at all. No other materials are permitted.

THE METHOD:

During the exercise, three different bridges must be demonstrated. Each must be capable of supporting the 'test weight'.

These are:

- 1. Bridge 1 must span a gap of at least 1.5 metres
- 2. The highest point of the Bridge 2 must be at least 10 cms above its fixing points once the weight is attached.
- 3. Bridge 3 must span at least 1 metre and have a 20 cm. 'fall' from one end to the other (ie. one end at least 20 cm. higher than the other)

The time allowed will be determined by the facilitator (recommended 40-45 minutes).

See http://rsvpdesign.co.uk for details.

Required Materials: Straws and connectors, blue tac, bag of marbles, 3 tables. A written brief (follow the text to the left on this page)

Set up three tables which can be moved around easily. Provide each table with a written brief, the supply or straws and connectors (children's construction straws work well, or drinking straws and dressmakers' pins can be used), some blu-tac or plasticene and a 'test weight' such as a small bag of marbles.

Divide your group into three sub-teams and send each team to a table. Tell them to read the written brief and to check their materials.

Begin the exercise time. Groups will need to:

- Identify if they will work on one task at a time or break into sub- groups and work on tasks in parallel.
- Establish the different constructions for each group to build and clarify the constraints.Check resource demands and allocate resources.
- Build the system, test it and then demonstrate it in action.

Tell them there are probably lots of creative ways of getting round the rules - ask them to work within the spirit of the exercise and do the best quality job they can in the time allowed!

Check that the finished constructions meet the building criteria and are fit for purpose.

This activity (one of 30) is provided within the RSVP Design Teamwork Web Powertool

See http://rsvpdesign.co.uk for details.





Section 4 : Choosing Experiential Learning Activities



How do I choose the Right Type of Acivity?

Experiential Learning activities come in many shapes and forms and it can be hard to know the right kind of activity to choose. In the previous pages there are examples of very simple, easily accessible activities that can be done indoors or outdoors with groups of varying size.

Within development programmes, activities may last for 10-15 minutes or for an extended period - the picture to the left is taken from a major organisation development simulation that extends over two working days.

(Senior leaders from RWE working at IMD in Switzerland)

The most important factors in selecting appropriate activities are the learning objectives, the relevance of the activity to the participant group, the ease with which the participants can relate 'in-exercise' learning to their own work/life experience and the inherent interest and challenge that the task provides.

To help in deciding which type of activity to use, or to create the structure for designing your own, the following questions can be useful.

Questions for Consideration in Selecting Experiential Learning





Section 5 : Designing Experiential Learning Activities



Colourblind is available from: http://rsvpdesign.co.uk

Example of an Activity Design Process

Colourblind® is a highly successful and internationally recognised example of an experiential learning activity that was designed to meet a specific client need.

In 1991, Geoff Cox was commissioned to develop an exercise that could be used on the first day of the induction training of Air Traffic Controllers, as they began an intensive and highly examined training programme.

The brief was to focus on precision in communication, the need to establish a common understanding between the givers and receivers of information and supportive teamwork under pressure.

Colourblind, the exercise that resulted from this brief, requires a group of blindfolded individuals to solve a problem by communicating, through verbal communication only, information about the colour and shape of a set of plastic components. As they share information they need to manage their own discussions, the collation of information, a system for checking and confirming their assumptions and the accurate understanding of every individual in the group.

The Thinking Process Behind the Design of Colourblind®

THE KEY MESSAGES?

Establish the 'takeaway' learning messages: in this case, the importance of establishing a common language and absolute assurance that this is shared.

THE ACTIVITY TYPE?

The exercise needs to be collaborative, must require every individual to have significant information and have restricted systems of communication

IMPORTANT SKILLS?

A chance to develop skills: giving precise descriptions, asking for and offering feedback, clarifying and summarising, maintaining discipline, concentration

MATERIALS AND ACTIVITY DE

Verbal descriptions of physical shapes - wear blindfolds No exchange of shapes Right first time: only one attempt to get answers right

DESIGN THE PROCESS

Give everyone information Require them all to share it Make it vital to use language precisely and accurately Add pressure to concentrate

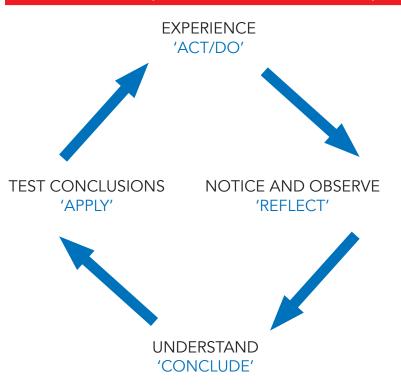
SIMULATE REAL LIFE

Restrict communication to verbal only: simulate radio working. Require a confirmation of 'message received and understood'. Develop and use a common language.



Section 6 : Reviewing Experiential Learning Activities

The Value of Any Experiential Learning Activity Depends upon the Quality of the Review



Why do we Review Experience?

The provision of an experiential learning activity offers a structured experience for the learners the Do/Act stage of the Kolb Experiential Learning Cycle.

Reviewing (sometimes called de-briefing) offers the opportunity for completion of the next two stages: reflection and the drawing of conclusions. This requires learners to notice and think about what happened during the activity and to make meaning from this.

One of the great benefits of experiential learning is that WHAT they learn will be individual, personal and may be unexpected. However, if the learning activity has been carefully chosen or designed, the learning is likely to be related to the objectives and themes of the training. This can be re-inforced by careful design of the review process.

What does a Good Review Include?

2

A good review includes a process for remembering what has happened and reflecting upon it. There are a number of things that we seek to draw attention to in a review process. Firstly, we seek to raise awareness of what happened: patterns of individual and group behaviour that were demonstrated, choices and decisions that were made, processes and systems that were established and rules that were put in place. Once learners have developed skills in observing and discriminating between the behaviours they see, they can move on to evaluating the effect of these behaviours.

In the second phase of a review, we seek to question the impact and effects of behaviours and to evaluate the results they achieve. This requires learners to make connections between what they noticed and what this might mean - drawing conclusions from what they have experienced. These conclusions will be different for each learner and will only be valuable if they are personally relevant.

The third stage of the review is intended to make learners think about how, where and when they can use the learning from the experience and what benefits they might achieve from doing this. It is a preparation for applying the learning in a new context, either within a training programme, back in the workplace or in lives and communities beyond the workplace



Section 6 : Reviewing Experiential Learning Activities

Different Review Techniques and Methods

Questions and Group

The most common way that trainers and facilitators review a learning experience is by asking a selection of questions. These can be directed to the whole group (which tends to allow the most vocal and confident learners to respond) or to small groups who work together to develop their answers and then report back.

If this technique is used, the choice of questions is vital. If the learning is open-ended, the facilitator might choose broad questions such as the examples on the right. These allow the learners to select the aspects of their experience that interest them and to direct the review themselves. Note that there are no "WHY?' questions in this selection. It can be counter productive to ask a group why they did something - it is much more valuable to focus on what they did, what effect this had and what they might do in future as a result of their learning.

Questions and Group

Careful selection of questions can focus the learners' attention on specific learning objectives and direct them to the learning messages that the activity was chosen to address.

For example, if an activity has been chosen to take a team through a problem-solving process, the questions can 'lead' the learners through a step-by-step process of solution-finding.

This techniques allows them to create their own 'theory', guided by best practice and ensures that there is some common learning to take away from the experience.

This is appropriate when an activity has been chosen as a rehearsal ground for developing skills or experimenting with different types of individual and group behaviour.

Examples of typical open-ended review questions

- 1. How successful do you believe that you were in achieving the aims of the exercise?
- 2. If you were successful, what did you do that was effective in moving you towards completion of the task?
- 3. Can you give specific examples of individual behaviours that were effective or helpful? (Individual names and contributions)
- 4. If you were not successful in achieving the task, what were the problems that you encountered? What did you do to try to over come them? With the benefit of hindsight, what else could you have tried?
- 5. If you were to repeat the exercise, what would you recommend that you do differently? What would you change about your own personal contribution?

Examples of review questions designed to focus on understanding a problem-solving process

- What did you do at the beginning to ensure that you all understood the problem? How confident were you that a successful solution could be achieved?
- 2. What was your understanding of the success criteria for an acceptable solution? ie. How would you know if you had solved the problem?
- 3. What process did you use for identifying any constraints that would impact on the viability of the solution eg. limits on time, budget, man power? Did you identify specific rules that had to be followed?
- 4. How did you go about generating alternative options?
- 5. What was your process for testing and evaluating ideas?
- 6. How did you make the decision about your chosen solution and how successful was your choice?



Section 6 : Reviewing Experiential Learning Activities

Different Review Techniques and Methods	
Numerical Review Techniques	

Example 1 - Line-Outs

Use a physical 'scale' to gauge the responses of individuals in a team to the experience they have had. For example, create an imaginary line across the width of the room. At one end of the line is 0% and at the other end is 100%.

Frame a question that asks people to choose a numerical value of between 0-100% and position themselves in the appropriate position along the line. For example:

How confident were you, at the start of the exercise, that you would achieve the task? 0%_____100%

How much of the available information was shared with you before you began the task? 0%_____100%

How much involvement did you have in the decision-making process?
0%_____100%

Example 2 - Line-Outs

Line-outs can also be used to get a sense of the diversity of opinion in a team. In this example, the same numerical scale and line-out can be used to assess the strength of a team, from the different perspectives of individual team members.

0%	A real understanding of our purpose and goals?	_100%
0%	A common set of values that we all subscribe to?	_100%
0%	A sense of trust in each other's competence and commitment?	100%
0%	A real understanding of each other's skills and needs?	100%
0%	A genuine willingness to leave our priorities to support each other	_ 100%



Section 6 : Reviewing Experiential Learning Activities

The Value of Any Experiential Learning Activity Depends upon the Quality of the Review

Numerical Review Techniques

Number Cards

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

One of the concerns that many training facilitators have is about ensuring that all learners have the opportunity to participate in group discussions and reviews. Using rating scales and numerical scores allows every learner to take part and requires each individual to commit to a decision.

Provide each participant with a simple set of number cards, numbered 1-10.

When asking questions, ask each participant to hold up the number of their choice in response to the question. These numbers can be used in different ways, for example:

To indicate strength of agreement: 1 = strongly disagree, 10 = strongly agree To indicate levels of involvement: 1 = full involvement, 10 = complete exclusion To indicate levels of motivation in the learning process: 1 = highly motivated, 10 = disengaged

If individuals hold up cards with similar numbers on them, this indicates a fair degree of alignment in opinion and belief.

If individuals hold up cards with a wide range of numbers, this indicates many different perceptions that need to be explored.

If one or two individuals hold up cards that are 'out of line' with the majority of the group, they should be allowed to explore from where those different observations arise.

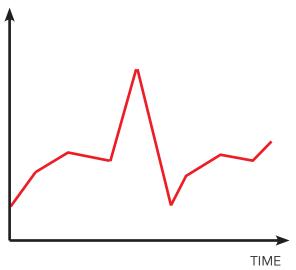
Graphs

Simple graphs make an excellent way of tracking the changes in attitudes, feelings and involvement of learners over a period of time.

These simplest of these charts work on an XY axis charts which can be tailored to the group and its purpose. They allow for a simple visual representation of change over time.

Examples of things that could be represented on the vertical axis include:

Quality of communication Confidence of success Adherence to rules/constraints Degree of innovation Level of risk being taken etc. LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT





Section 6 : Reviewing Experiential Learning Activities

Different Review techniques and Methods

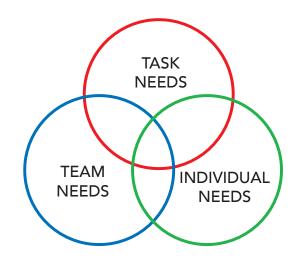
Visual Review Techniques

Example: John Adair's Action Centred Leadership

John Adair's simple model explores three different areas that anyone in a leadership position needs to attend to:

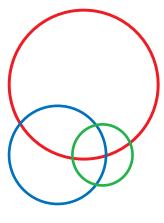
- 1. The needs of the task: what has to happen to get the job done?
- 2. The needs of the team: what needs to happen to maintain and develop the team?
- 3. The needs of individual team members: what do we have to do to support individual team members in their contribution and development?

The three circles in the Venn diagram represent the three different sets of needs. It is rare that they all are the same size: the relative size will depend upon where the focus of attention is.

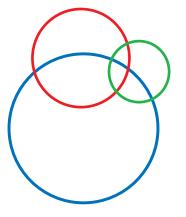


Reviewing Using the ADAIR 'THREE CIRCLES' Model

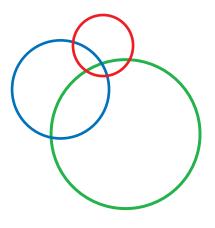
Use the three circles to explore what happened in the team during an activity. Draw up different diagrams to illustrate where the focus of attention was and to explore a) why that happened, b) the impact on the task, team and individuals and c) any recommendations for creating a better balance in the future.



CRISIS OR DEADLINE?



TEAM CONFLICT OR INTER-PERSONAL ISSUES?



A TEAM MEMBER IN NEED OR EXTRA SUPPORT?



Section 6 : Reviewing Experiential Learning Activities

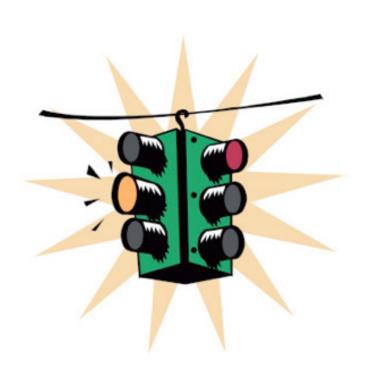
Different Review techniques and Methods

Visual Review Techniques

Use an image of a set of traffic lights. Draw a set of lights on each of three flip charts: one with the red light coloured, one with the amber light coloured and one with the green light coloured.

Ask the participants to write their responses on the appropriate sheet:

- RED Light: What do we need to stop doing now? What decisions should we put on hold? AMBER Light: What do we need to pause and reflect
- what do we need to pause and reneed on? What should we be prepared for or ready to respond to?
- GREEN Light: What should we start doing now? What should we accelerate?



Use Icons or Images to Represent Different Aspects of Performance



Use a set of visual images to represent different aspects of a task. Have these on easily accessible sheets of paper (ideally laminated) around the walls. Use them as 'headers' for graffitti sheets - large blank papers upon which people can write thoughts and ideas as they arise. Encourage people to write on these as the review develops - and to come back to them later if new ideas emerge. This allows a 'build up' of ideas that can be used in later action planning.

Examples might be:

Goal or Target





Generating Ideas and Innovating





Communication and Trust



Section 6 : Reviewing Experiential Learning Activities

Different Review techniques and Methods

Visual Review Techniques

The use of METAPHOR can be a great way of encouraging learners to talk in more depth about subjects that might be perceived as risky, sensitive or difficult to tackle. Difficult conversations can often be helped by talking through metaphor or through an image - it is somehow easier to talk about the picture than it is to talk about first hand experience.

A collection of varied imagery can be used in many different ways, to tap into more intuitive and emotional responses to questions and can be of value in moving people away from a very rational, cerebral response, especially when exploring behaviour and relationships.

There are a number of different types of imagery which can be of great benefit. Build up a collection of 'trigger images' to use to introduce people, topics and open up dialogue.

Examples of types of imagery include:

- General imagery: natural objects, manufactured objects, landscapes, people, buildings etc (see images right)
- Images that are selected for a particular theme: eg, a set of images of facial expressions or a set of road signs with assorted instructions and warnings
- Images that represent familiar situations or problems, that people will relate to their own experience





Dialoogle ™ (above right)

expresspack™ (right)

IMAGES OF ORGANISATIONS™ (left)



Three examples of different packs of images, available from RSVP Design: see http://rsvpdesign.co.uk for details.



Section 6 : Reviewing Experiential Learning Activities

Feedback Activities

TEAM AND INDIVIDUAL FEEDBACK USING METAPHOR: WHAT VEHICLE?

This is an introduction to giving and receiving feedback for teams whose members are reasonably confident and trust each other. The model of giving feedback through the use of a metaphor is an excellent one, as it allows observations that may be more difficult if spoken directly.

Before using an activity such as this, it is important to be clear with the participants about the process involved and the guidelines for giving and receiving useful feedback.

The metaphor below uses a vehicle. Any other metaphors can be used: examples are:

Animals. If this team was to choose an animal to represent it, what animal would it be and why?

Machines. If this team was to choose a machine to represent it, what machine would it be and why?

Songs. Select a song title that you believe describes this person/this team.

Think of some more of your own!

The Vehicle Metaphor

Step 1:

- If this team was a vehicle, what would it be?
- Is it the sleek sports car, in which image is everything?
- Or is it the Formula 1 Ferrari, which can outperform anything else in its class?
- Is it a sturdy, solid agricultural vehicle, which will keep going for years, in the worst of conditions, with little maintenance?
- Is it a London taxi-cab, always going where someone else wants it to go?
- Is it a truck, carrying heavy weights, through long hours of monotonous motorway driving?
- Or is it a "green" SMART car, built for economy, function and representing strongly held values and beliefs?
- If this is the vehicle, which team members represent the individual parts of the car?

Step 2:

Think of your own team and who performs the vital team functions that keep you on the road! For example:

- Who is represented by the spark plug, generating the 'spark' of an idea that gets the team started?
- Who is represented by the accelerator, pushing ahead to reach goals within the deadlines
- Who is represented by the brakes, slowing things down and ensuring the team moves at a sustainable pace?
- Who is represented by the headlights, looking ahead and highlighting future dangers of opportunities?
- Who is represented by the windscreen wipers, keeping the clarity of direction to allow the team to move forward

Encourage participants to make their own connections and to feed them back with sensitivity and with specific examples.





Section 6 : Reviewing Experiential Learning Activities

Feedback Activities: Gift Giving

This is an appraisal and feedback activity in which people make, find or describe gifts for each other. It is an ideal way of closing a programme, particularly one in which participants have spent an extended period of time together.

This is a fun activity which tends to bring out surprising amounts of creativity and sensitivity once givers realise the responsibility they have towards the receivers. Receivers will be more receptive, knowing the time, thought and care that has gone into creating personalised gifts for them.

The qualities represented by the gifts should have been in evidence during the activity or activities being reviewed.

These are some of the options for setting up a 'gift' session:

- 1. Use a physical gift. Provide a selection of creative materials and ask team members to construct a gift which they feel is suitable for, or representative of, another named individual in the group.
- 2. Use a 'virtual' gift. Each person takes time to think about and describe a gift they would choose to offer to another person in the team
- 3. Divide the group in two or three, and ask sub-groups to prepare gifts for individuals in the other sub-group(s).

Feedback Activities: Feedback Cards

Feedback cards are cards that have specific descriptions or qualities written upon them. These individual cards are used in various ways to offer feedback to individuals in a group. The content of the cards can be:

- 1. A simple descriptive word (patient, adventurous, generous, supportive, challenging, meticulous)
- 2. A more extended description (a detailed planner, a creative visionary, an objective mediator)
- 3. Based upon team roles (eg. Belbin team roles)
- 4. Retrospective and specific to an activity (the person who took the biggest risk, the person who made decisions)

On the following page is a set of cards based on 16 'Task and Team Maintenance Functions' identified by David Jacques. They are used to identify the different types of team contribution made by individuals in high-performing teams.

Experienced trainers could easily make their own set of cards using other criteria particularly relevant to the age, ability and work demands of the participating teams/group.

To use the cards:

- 1. Shuffle the pack of cards.
- 2. Take turns to draw one of the cards and decide which member of the group it most applies to.
- 3. Give the card to that person, with an explanation of how and when you have seen that contribution to the team.

As in any activity that uses feedback, introduce the appropriate guidelines and suggestions about giving and receiving feedback. Distinguish between an individual and his/her behaviour. Offer the feedback with specific examples of observed behaviour and explore the impact (positive or negative) of this on others.



Section 6 : Reviewing Experiential Learning Activities

Feedback Cards Based Upon Team Task and Maintenance Roles (based on the work of David Jacques)

INFORMATION SEEKING: Asking for relevant facts and information. Seeking out research experience.

INFORMATION GIVING: Providing relevant facts or authoritative information and evidence.

SUMMARISING: Drawing together the content of past discussions, presenting agreed actions

ORIENTING: Providing direction to discussions, keeping the group on track, questioning relevance

ELABORATING: building on previous comments, extending and enlarging ideas, giving examples

CLARIFYING: Probing for meaning and certainty, checking for common understanding, avoiding confusion

CO-ORDINATING: Showing the relationships between ideas, trying to link ideas and suggestions

OPINION GIVING: Offering pertinent beliefs, stating personal opinions and preferences

PROPOSING: Suggesting alternatives, new approaches or different ways of doing things

TESTING: Checking whether a group is ready to make a decision or move to on to another topic or issue

ENCOURAGING: Being friendly, warm and responsive, drawing team members together and supporting

INCLUDING: Ensuring everyone is engaged and involved, valuing individual difference and input

MEDIATING: Harmonising, conciliating differences, recognising the potential for conflict

STANDARD SETTING: Ensuring rules are followed, expressing quality standards and ethical values

RELIEVING TENSION: Using humour appropriately, relieving negative feelings, raising morale in a team

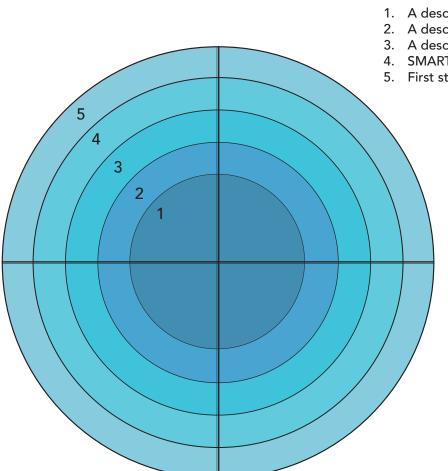
FOLLOWING: Going along with the ideas of others, being a good listener, doing what is needed



Section 6 : Reviewing Experiential Learning Activities

Suggested Activities for Development Planning - The Final Stage of Experiential Learning

Domain Mapping



1. A description of the development area selected

- 2. A description of the current situation
- 3. A description of the ideal situation
- 4. SMART Goals
- 5. First steps

Using the diagram in sections, the participant identifies the areas in which she/he wish to develop a series of action points. Areas are parts either of their social life (relationships, professional, educational, health...) or professional development areas (specific management skills, qualifications, competences, responsibilities). They choose the areas they wish to use. In each area in turn, they work through the questions below, filling their responses into the correct section on the diagram. (Big-scale diagrams help!)

- 1. Identify, specifically, the development area you have chosen.
- Describe, in some detail, the current situation. 2.
- 3. Describe, in some detail, your ideal situation. No constraints!
- 4. Identify the goals you would have to achieve to move to this ideal situation. Check them against the SMART model.
- 5. Identify what the first steps to achieving the goals would be and how, where and when you could achieve those steps.



Section 6 : Reviewing Experiential Learning Activities

Suggested Activities for Development Planning - The Final Stage of Experiential Learning

Well-Formed Outcomes

An alternative approach to development planning for those struggling to set goals.

Working through these questions provides a test to see if a goal that has been set is actually important enough to the person involved to secure their commitment. This is an important skill for anyone involved in objective-setting for themselves or others and can be used in those situations in which there is a lack of clarity about the relative priority of many possible personal goals.

Questions to establish a well-formed outcome

What do you want? State this in the positive, as specifically and clearly as possible. How will you know when you get it? What will you see, hear and feel that will tell you that you have achieved this? Who determines whether you achieve this? Is it something that you can start and maintain by yourself? Does it fit? Is this something which is in keeping with other things which are happening and are also important to you? What is the context? Where, when and with whom do you want to achieve this outcome? What do I/we stand to lose? Will you lose anything else that is important to you if you achieve this outcome? What is the cost? Is it worth it in relation to other things that also have a financial/resource cost? How much time will it take? Is it worth it in relation to other things that also have a time cost? Does it fit with who you are?

Is this in keeping with your sense of self, sense of identity and sense of purpose?

TALK TO US ABOUT OUR RANGE OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

A CATALOGUE OF ACTIVITY BASED RESOURCES

DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF LEARNING EVENTS

+44 (0) 141 561 0387

,

rsvpdesign.co.uk

@ sales@rsvpdesign.co.uk

RSVP Design Ltd: Mirren Court 3,123 Renfrew Road, Paisley, PA3 4EA

Company Registration: SC253981 VAT Number: 817 5134 35