



Open-space Learning in Real World Contexts*

Workshop Practice: Ice-breakers and Warm-ups

1. 1-2-3 Clap

Description:

Participants are put into pairs. Facilitator asks for a volunteer to demonstrate the activity. Facilitator says '1', volunteer says '2', facilitator says '3', volunteer says '1', facilitator says '2', volunteer says '3'. End of demonstration. Pairs now take up the activity. After a couple of minutes the facilitator stops the activity and recalls the volunteer. The demonstration is identical except that '2' is replaced by a clap. Pairs take up the new activity. After a couple of minutes the facilitator stops the activity and recalls the volunteer. The demonstration is identical except that '1' is replaced by a stamp of the foot. Again, after a couple of minutes the facilitator stops the activity and recalls the volunteer. The demonstration is identical except that '3' is replaced by a click of the fingers. Pairs now take up the final activity. End and feedback.

Purpose

Again, the activity causes amusement as it is actually quite difficult to get it right. Stimulates collaboration and provokes thinking about how collaboration works. Contrasts and combines intellectual and embodied activity.

2. Clapping Circle

Description:

Standing in a circle, this game has three basic levels and countless variations (including the popular 'zip/zap/boing'). The advantage of playing this game is that it encourages the group to share a non-verbal act of collaborative physicality which will engage a diverse cohort, creating cohesion and energy for learning. 1. The first level requires the group to clap in one direction (clockwise) around the circle, establishing a shared rhythm. 2. The second level allows any participants to reverse the direction of the clap (anti-clockwise) but this should function as a surprising turn of events; 3. The third level introduces the possibility of sending the clap across the circle which requires all members to be constantly alert. If a group is particularly able to do this (or a large number of participants), then you should introduce more than one clap at the same time.

3. One Word at a Time

Description:

Participants form a circle. Facilitator explains activity: each member of the group has to say a single word in turn with the intention of creating a 'story'. The activity can go on for as long as the facilitator cares to allow it. There are many variations

depending on how much 'structure' the facilitator wishes to introduce. It might be desirable to instruct each participant to make one in three words articles or prepositions should a 'realistic' narrative be required. Similarly, limiting words to nouns, adjectives and verbs can have surreal effects. Feedback.

Purpose:

Usually causes great amusement. Participants begin to depend on each other very quickly. Stimulates creativity and shows how work can be devised from seemingly random materials.

4. Pointing Name Game

Description:

The basic principle of name games is to welcome the group to the learning space and to encounter the various individuals in the group. The advantages of this specific game are that: a) you will hear each participant pronounce their own name, b) it creates a dynamic energy through game-playing and c) if caught out, participants have the chance to be welcomed back into the game.

1. Form a circle on chairs;
2. Explain that each person will point at someone else across the circle but *say their own name out aloud*;
3. Start with an example and move slowly through the various steps of the activity, including the likelihood of being caught out if you hesitate, say the wrong name, or interrupt the flow;
4. Model the seated position for showing you are out (torso facing in, but legs to one side) which will increase the possibility of being re-introduced to the game at a later stage;
5. Run the game a few times until the group finds a fast but steady rhythm and every participant has been included in the activity.

5. Power Tableaux

Description:

Prepare some cards with specific power-related binaries (dominance/submission; authority/inferiority; leadership/teamwork) and distribute at random to each member of the group. Ask participants to find a space of their own and create still picture which captures the quality written on their card. Ask each person to find a partner and show their still image to each other, trying to read the body language and guess the quality shown through the body. The central task is to link the two still pictures into one image that communicates a relationship between them.

Purpose:

These images are then seen one by one and consequently body language is analysed in a way that tunes everyone into the physicality of open-space learning.

6. Two Truths and a Lie

Description:

Participants form a circle. Facilitator explains activity: participants form pairs and have a couple of minutes to think of three 'facts' about themselves to tell their partner. Two of these 'facts' must be true and one must be a lie. The participants

then exchange their three 'facts' and guess which are true. The circle then reforms and each member of the pair introduces the other to the rest of the group and recounts their 'facts'. The rest of the group then guess what is true and what is not. The facilitator can choose to allow questions or not depending on time or the purpose of the activity. Feedback.

Purpose:

Allows individuals to get to know each other quickly. Often causes amusement. Participants quickly relax. Allows participants to be as creative as they like about their history.

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