



Facilitation Techniques

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There are thousands of good techniques to make our workshop productive, participative, friendly, cooperative... and fun! Here some of these are explained. You can create your own ones!!

GAMES AND GROUP DYNAMICS:

Main goals:

- Get to know
- Get in touch
- Interaction
- Warm up
- Start communicating
- Team building
- Get into issue
- Icebreaker

¹ A volunteer group at FFS-HEPA in 2011

I. For welcome and warm ups

- **World map and gallery**

Each participant introduces him/herself (name, age, where from), puts sticker on right spot of world map.

Stand in front of worlds map, what is the word for “welcome”/”hello” in your language (piece of paper), all others greet kids/young people/adults in their language.

Material: World map, stickers, pencils, pieces of paper.

- **Gallery**

Form random couples (name tags)

Couples interview each other: name, age, biggest wish, fill out gallery sheet

Introduce partner (xy comes from... her/his biggest wish is...) gallery on the wall

Material: Gallery sheet for each person (space for photo, name, age, country, biggest wish for the week), polaroid camera, sello tape, pencils

- **Doing our Identification Card**

We can ask the participants to fill a small presentation card.

Everybody fill the card, read and put it in a WELCOME WALL.

After that, everybody move in the room and must talk with someone unknown for him/her, learn something about him/her, write in a small piece of paper and put close to the presentation card.

- **Find someone who...**

Everyone have a brief form.

This form must to be fill with the names of different people that have some specific characteristic like you

For example:

- Someone that have the same shoe size of you.
- Someone that like the same music style of you.
- Someone that play the same instrument of you.
- Someone with the same number of sisters/brothers of you.

- **Pio-pio**

Everybody close their eyes and move without destination around the room.

All of us are small chickens and need to find our mum.

When 2 of them get in touch (crashing or touching with their hands, on something, because there are a lot of people moving in a small area...) they say “pio – pio”.

If the other person that they are getting in touch answers “pio – pio” both of them know that is not the mum, both of them are small chicken.

When they get in touch with the mum, the mum doesn't answer anything, so, the small people will hug the mum and stay quiet.

Little by little, every small chickens will be hugged by the mum.

- **Fruit dance**

Everybody is in a circle hold by the shoulders with the person on his/her right.

They move in circle singing “It’s the fruit dance”.

The director, will be introducing some fruit names and the different fruits names have a special movement...

II. Name games

- **Adjectives**

The group stands in a circle.

Introduce yourself by giving your name and a positive adjective that begins with the same letter as your name, e.g. "I'm happy Harold".

Everybody takes a turn at introducing him or herself.

The person next to you introduces you with your adjective, and then introduces him or herself with their own adjective.

The next person in turn introduces first of all you, then the first participant, then him or herself etc.

The round is finished once everyone has introduced themselves with their names and adjectives.

Rules: The adjectives used must be positive to the person who is using it, and the same adjective may not be used more than one time. If anyone has difficulty in thinking up an adjective or remembering the names and adjectives, others may help them out.

- **Names record**

The participants sit or stand in a circle.

The game leader asks that at a certain start signal, they all say their first names one after the other very quickly.

The game leader times it. Could it be done even quicker? Could the whole group break the record if they tried again?

Several rounds of the game can be played, until the quickest possible time is reached.

Pay attention that the names are all said clearly and fully. The memory effect with regard to the names is relatively small with this basic form of the game, as names are being said very quickly, and so variation 1 should be played as a further round.

Variation 1: Once the game has been played a few times, the level of difficulty can be raised. Now each person must not give their own name but the name of the person in front of or after them. Can it be done as quickly as with the basic form of the game?

- **The funny thing**

The participants sit in a circle and the first person gives a "thing" to the next person and gives the "thing" a name that begins with the same letter as their own first name, e.g. "I'm Tom and I'm giving you a telephone".

The next person passes on the thing in the same way, but repeats the name of the person before him and what they called the thing, e.g. "I'm Laura and I have here a laptop which Tom gave me. But he said it was a telephone..." and so on, until the "thing" has gone all the way around in the circle.

Then ask everyone to stand up and swap places, and repeat the process.

- **Building network**

We have a ball of yarn/wool and we want to build a big network.

We get the start of the ball and throw the ball to other people while you say her/his name.

- The people that received the ball must to hold it, don't let it go, and throw the ball to other participant.

To finish the game, everybody must receive at least once the ball.

Variation: We can play with 3 or 4 ball of yarn.

III. For working on the topic

1. Think and Listen

Work in pairs for a Think and Listen. For half the time one person is the thinker and the other is the listener. The thinking turn is for the thinker's benefit. It is a time for the thinkers to collect and develop their thoughts at their own pace, in their own way and using their own language if they choose. The listener makes no comments and asks no questions, but does make encouraging sounds and movements to indicate that their attention to the thinker is active. Common time periods for a Think and Listen are between two to five minutes each. What the thinker speaks about and how their thinking develops is confidential, unless otherwise agreed.

When you are the thinker, remember: the time is for you, and you do not need to appear bright or knowledgeable. When you are the listener remember: look at your partner and be active in your listening. Do not interrupt or ask questions.

2. Go-Round

In a Go-Round everyone gets to speak for a short, equal time, taking turns, often going round a circle of people. In meetings the facilitator can offer topics or headings to guide contributions, such as "Say your name, where you are from and how you are feeling today."

3. Brainstorming

One of the easiest and most enjoyable ways to quickly generate a lot of ideas is to brainstorm. A successful brainstorm helps:

- Encourage creativity
- Involve everyone
- Generate excitement and energy
- Separate people from the ideas they suggest. What becomes important is the idea itself, not the person who suggests it.

Guidelines:

- Start by reviewing the topic; make sure everyone understands the issues.
- Give people a minute or two of silent thinking time.
- When ideas start to flow, let them come. Freewheel-don't hold back.

- No discussion of the ideas during the brainstorm. That will come later.
- No criticism of ideas - not even a groan or grimace!
- Hitchhike - build on ideas generated by others in the group.
- Write all ideas on a flipchart so everyone can see them.

4. Check In

A facilitator will need to know how the participants at a meeting are doing. Is their energy level OK? Do people need a break? Can people keep going for another 10 minutes so we can finish this item before lunch? Are people warm/cool enough. Is fresh air needed?

As an alternative to hearing from everyone, as when using a go-round for a check-in, the 'thumbs' method is a swift alternative. As an example for knowing the energy level of the group: show your thumb up for good energy level, thumb down if you need a rest, and thumb anywhere in between to show how you are.

5. Mind Maps

Mind maps are freehand diagrams that start from a circle in the middle and have 'arms' or 'branches' radiating out at all angles. Mind maps give a visual representation of the whole of a subject and allow the main points to be easily identified. They are a flexible way of presenting information that allows for alteration and making connections between topics much more easily than linear text. See image aside for more information about how to create a mind map.

6. Affinity Grouping

Step 1. Write a sentence or question describing a situation and post it on a wall or flipchart where everyone can see it.

Step 2. Brainstorm all the ideas or issues related to the situation or answering the question and write each idea on a sticky note. Depending on the size of the group, this can be done as a full group, in small groups, or silently as individuals. If the topic is sensitive, working individually provides anonymity and allows controversial or emotional things to come to light.

Step 3. All group participants work simultaneously to sort the ideas into 5-10 clusters. The sorting is done without speaking and it is only after it is finished that the logic of the group will emerge. If the group is large, the original sort can be done in small groups and

then merged into a large group.

Step 4. A group consensus is used to create a label to summarize or give a title to each cluster.

7. Multivoting

Step 1. Brainstorm the list of issues, problems, or solutions to be prioritized and write the statements on a flipchart.

Step 2. As a group, discuss the list to eliminate duplicate ideas and to clarify the meanings of any of the statements.

Step 3. Rewrite the final list of statements on a flipchart, leaving room for votes. For easy reference, you can label each idea with a number or letter.

Step 4. As a group, decide what criteria to use in evaluating and rating the ideas.

Step 5. – Voting by one of various methods

- Each person silently ranks the ideas and writes the rankings on the flipchart. The ideas with the highest totals are the ones to consider for implementation.
- Each person ranks only what he/she considers the 4-5 best ideas.
- Use dot labels or stickers for voting. Each person has a certain number of dots (3-5) to “spend” on ranking, and can disperse them on several ideas or use all on one great idea.
- Two colours of dots can be used. Everyone gets 3-5 dots of one colour and one “super dot” of another colour which is worth more points.

Step 6. Discuss the results as a group.

8. Six thinking hats

The person who facilitates the meeting wears the blue hat. This is the hat that controls the other hats (although eventually this person may want to pass the blue hat to another person). The person with the blue hat can at any moment invite the group to put on any of the following hats:

- **White:** with this hat you have to bring up facts, numbers and objective information.
- **Red:** you can speak about your feelings, sensations, intuitions, what is going well or bad for you.
- **Black:** it is your time for criticism and for bringing up the difficulties or pitfalls of any proposal.

- **Yellow:** you can bring up new ideas and suggestions to improve any proposal.
- **Green:** this is the creative hat. It allows you to say whatever comes up to your mind.

The facilitator (blue hat) decides whether everybody wears the same hat, or just a part of the group wears a given hat and others wear a hat in a different colour, depending on whether the facilitator wants to generate more ideas or to increase the depth of the debate.



9. World Cafe

The big group is divided in small groups of 4-5 people sitting around a table with a paper tablecloth —to write, draw, or doodle in the midst of the conversation— and talking about a given subject presented under the form of a question. In each table there is a table 'host' who stays at the same table throughout the process. After 20-30 minutes the general host invites participants to change tables. The table host explains briefly the essence of the

previous conversation to the guests who arrive for the next round. After three rounds of progressive conversation there is a dialogue among the whole group with the intention of gathering and recording key ideas, questions or insights that might be useful for action planning or other purposes.

IV. For review and daily feedback

- **Mood barometer**

Each participant one sticky dot

- stick it to hot/cold
- statements: I am in a XY mood, because...

Material: Sticky dots, flipchart with fever thermometer

- **Best/worst thing of the day**

Two pieces of paper each (worst/best thing)

- Explain it to others, stick paper on flipchart (top of the day, flop of the day or weighing

machine).

- Material: Paper, pencils, flipchart

- **Something I have learned today**

Form couples, tell each other what you have learned today (10 min.)

- Introduce partners learning, put in “chest of wisdom” (flipchart)

- Material: Paper, pencils, flipchart

- **Postcard writing**

Every person gets a “postcard to a friend” (sheet of paper: the weather/food is..., the group is..., the most important thing today..., you wouldn’t believe...)

- Single work 5 min.

- Read postcard to others, put in “letter box”.

RESOURCES

Juanita Brown and William Isaac. **The World Cafe.**

<http://www.theworldcafe.com/what.htm>

E. De Bono , **Six thinking hats.** <http://www.debonogroup.com/index.php>

Robin Clayfield. **Manual for teaching Permaculture creativity**

Joana Macy and Molly Young. **Coming Back to Life.** Practices to Reconnect Our Lives, Our World.

Helena Cornelius and Shoshana Faire. **Everyone can win.**

<http://www.crnhq.org/pages.php?pID=77>

Gaia Education Design for Sustainability <http://www.gaiamedia.org/>