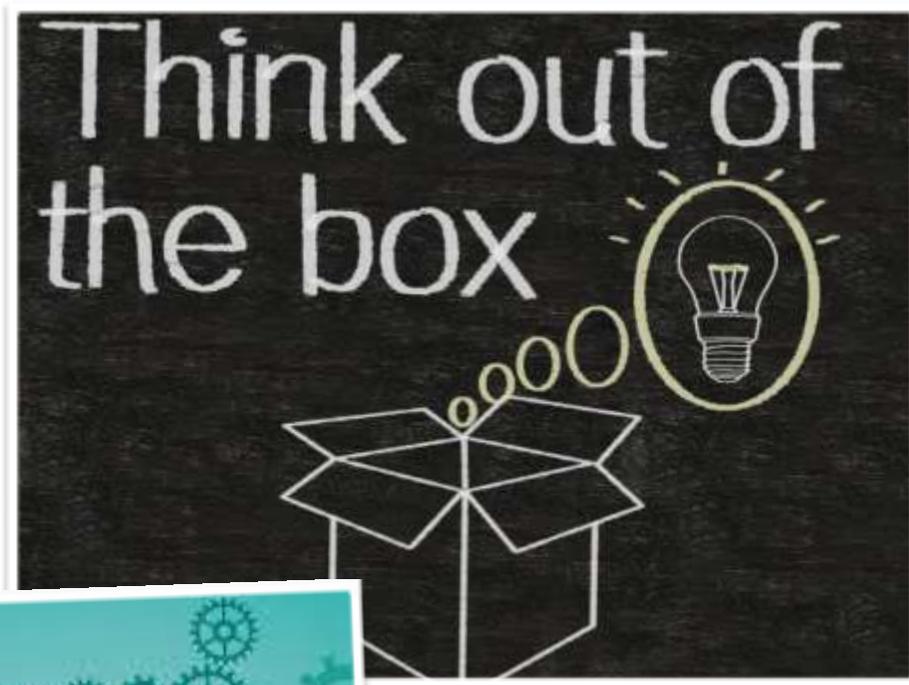


Experiential Learning Activities

Team-Based | Problem-Solving



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Icebreakers

Tweet your Experience

Objective: Participants are to come up with a tweet and one hashtag that best describes what they hope to experience during their engagement activity i.e. field trip. They should express what they might think/feel/do, etc.

Participants: Individuals or teams of 6 + facilitator

Instructions/Rules: Participants have a collection of 131 words and in 1-2 minutes they must craft the most clever and compelling tweet and one hashtag they can based on the theme - i.e. experience abroad

Once complete, individuals or teams must share with the entire group their tweet + hashtag. The facilitator selects the most compelling tweet and awards can be handed out if desired.

Materials Needed: 131 printed words + “#” (cut outs) per individual or group, or use of black/white board with chalk/markers. Standard meeting or lecture room and tables (if using cut outs) required. “Awards” or incentives can be handed out if desired i.e. chocolates, marketing materials (pens, pencils, highlighters, magnets) etc.

Timing: 1-2 minutes for tweet creation + additional time for group discussion. If time allows, switch up the teams and have them work with new individuals.

Outcomes/Goals: Linguistic challenge to test abilities for creativity in a limited amount of time. A group challenge/dynamic to test tensions or where humour can arise. Identifying different levels of engagement from the group and differing personalities. Getting out of your comfort zone and working under pressure is the challenge.

Blindfold Drawing

Objective: This is an activity that focuses on interpretation and communication. Once the drawing is finished, it’s always interesting to see how the drawer interprets the description.

Participants: Teams (minimum 2 per team) + facilitator

Instructions/Rules: Divide everyone into groups of two or more. Have individuals sitting/standing facing away from each other. Give one side the pen and paper or black/white board and chalk/marker, and the other the picture. Those with the picture are to describe what is depicted to their other teammate(s) without actually saying what it is. For example, if the image is a worm in an apple, they are not to say, “Draw an apple with a worm in it.” The person who is required to draw has to base their drawing on what they think the picture depicts, based on the verbal descriptions.

Materials Needed: Pictures, pen and paper, or black/white board and chalk/marker

Timing: 10 – 15 minutes

Outcomes/Goals: Team-based activity where clear communication is key. Forces those describing the image to be creative in their prompts, and those drawing out the image to use active listening and interpretive skills.

Team Identity

Objective: Team bonding exercise.

Participants: Teams of 4 or more + facilitator

Instructions/Rules: Teams generate a team list, team name, team logo/symbol and team motto. Ask teams to share with the entire group.

Materials Needed: Paper, pens/markers/pencils or black/white board, chalk/markers

Timing: 15-20 minutes + time for discussion

Outcomes/Goals: Creating a team dynamic and showcasing their creative and teamwork abilities.

De-Stress Breathing Exercise

Objective: To use a breathing exercise to decrease stress and enhance focus and calm.

Participants: Individuals + facilitator

Instructions/Rules: Participants are to stand (if possible), take a full breath in through the nose, filling their lungs, at the same time while raising their arms up, palms down, to shoulder height. Pause for 2-3 seconds. When exhaling out through the mouth, force hands down firmly at the same time while expelling the sound “HA!” The out-breath is said loudly, and is twice as long as the in-breath. Repeat three to four times.

WARNING: Participants can become lightheaded so caution should be taken when repeating activity and ensure that adequate seating is available if needed.

Materials Needed: None

Timing: Approximately 60 seconds for each breathing round

Outcomes/Goals: Getting out of your comfort zone and learning something new is the challenge. Can enhance productivity, and can aid in distressing.

History: This breathing exercise is derived from the teachings of the Ancient KaHuna’s of the Polynesian islands of Hawaii. Huna breathing exercises are used in many ways including de-stressing.

Problem-Solving Activities

This is Better Than That

Objective: This exercise inspires team creativity in problem solving. The idea is to not make the scenarios too easy so it becomes obvious which objects are the most useful.

Participants: Teams of 4 or more + facilitator

Instructions/Rules: Select four or more objects that are different, or the same objects that look different. Split the participants into even teams. Describe a scenario where each team has to solve a problem using only those objects. This can be hypothetical or fictional such as “You’re stranded on a desert island” to “You’re saving the world from Godzilla!” Have each team rank the objects based on their usefulness in that specific scenario, along with their reasoning and describe to the entire group.

Materials Needed: Four or more objects in total

Timing: 15 – 20 minutes + time for discussion

Outcomes/Goals: Creative approach to identifying the usefulness of various objects in a given scenario. Forces the group to work together to solve a hypothetical and/or fictional problem.

I’m Puzzled

Objective: Working together in teams to solve a puzzle with missing pieces.

Participants: Teams of 4 or more + facilitator

Instructions/Rules: The teams are provided with puzzle pieces and are asked to complete the puzzle in a limited amount of time and determine what the image is. Discuss as a group how they worked together to solve the puzzle and how this made them feel about the activity and working as a team.

Materials Needed: Puzzles (with missing pieces)

Timing: 20 minutes + time for discussion

Outcomes/Goals: Problem-based activity where the teams are to complete a puzzle that has missing pieces. Creates group tension to force the team to work together on problem solving.

New Department on Campus

Objective: Team-based activity to identify a new department on campus and what the vision of this department might be.

Participants: Teams of 4 or more + facilitator

Instructions/Rules: In teams, participants are provided with a card that has a three to four letter acronym printed on it. Instruct the groups that the acronym they have in front of them is for their team in order to create a new department on campus. Ask the groups to expand the acronym and to develop a vision for their new department. Ask the teams to share with the entire group their new department name and vision. Facilitator to move around the room, listening in on the various discussions and lending some feedback where necessary.

Materials Needed: Cards with printed acronyms along with paper and writing tools for the groups.

Timing: 20 minutes + time for discussion - limit each group with the amount of time they have for group discussion.

Outcomes/Goals: Creative thinking and active listening skills are utilized in this activity. Teams are asked to work together to create a vision for their group/campus. More dominant and competing personalities can be at the forefront with this activity, so it will be important for the others to step-up and share their voice in the process. Limiting final discussion forces the speaker to be concise in their description.

Budget

Objective: As a team, how will the participants come together to form a consensus on how the funds will be spent/allocated.

Participants: Teams of 4 or more + facilitator

Instructions/Rules: Each team is allocated a large sum of money (e.g. \$250,000) to be spent on a specific initiative/task/organization, etc. Each individual in the team generates their own

budget of how they will spend the funds and is asked to report back to the entire team. The team then discusses the ideas and develops a team budget on how the monies will be spent, identifying individual budget line items important to the team and activity. The teams are then asked to discuss with the entire group what happened when the individuals came back together to discuss their individual budgets. What problems emerged? How were they able to handle them as a team? How was each individual able to convince the “leader” of the team’s needs to fulfill this project?

Materials Needed: Paper and writing tools

Timing: 5-7 minutes for individual, 10-15 minutes for team discussion + additional time for group discussion

Outcomes/Goals: Establishing leadership and initiative in a team dynamic without instructing the teams to identify a leader. Problem solving skills are utilized in determining how funds are prioritized and to be spent/allocated as a team. More dominant and competing personalities can be at the forefront with this activity, so it will be important for the others to step-up and share their voice in the process. Limiting final discussion forces the speaker to be concise in their description.

Case Study

Objective: Teams to work out case study problems and present to group

Participants: Teams of 4-6 + facilitator

Instructions/Rules: Teams are asked to work on a case study to come up with innovative and practical solutions to the problem at hand.

Facilitator can use an existing or well-known case study, come up with his/her own, or use any of the following resources to obtain case studies:

Case Study Databases:

- <http://sciencecases.lib.buffalo.edu/cs/>
- <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/research/casestudies/>
- http://ethics.iit.edu/eelibrary/search/site/?filters=sm_facetbuilder_pub_t:%22pub_t:facet_3%22

Materials Needed: Paper and writing tools

Timing: 15-20 minutes + additional discussion time

Outcomes/Goals: Using a common sense approach is critical to solving the problems presented. Identification of how individuals and teams are able to effectively solve case studies, and some of the creative ways in which they were able to come up with the solutions - whether they are correct or not.

What Can You Do With A...

Objective: Participants are asked to use a creative approach in how they would utilize an everyday object in solving a problem.

Participants: Individuals or teams of 4 + facilitator

Instructions/Rules: Participants are shown an image of an everyday object (or the object itself) i.e. a coat hanger or a water bottle. This can be one object for the entire group, or different objects per team. The group or team is then provided with a problem in which they will be required to use this object to solve. The participants (individuals or teams) are then asked to list different possible uses for this object. The teams are then asked to share with the entire group by describing what every day object they were provided with (if more than one object was used) and how they used this object to solve the problem provided.

They are given the freedom to use anything in direct relation to the object i.e. size, shape and material of the object, and can only use additional items to secure the object i.e. duct tape, glue, etc. nothing more. They can imagine shrinking the object, cutting it, using more than one etc. to solve this problem.

Materials Needed: Paper and writing tools

Timing: 20 minutes + additional time for discussion

Outcomes/Goals: Team-based problem solving activity using limited supplies and time. Creative thinking skills are used with this activity as it forces the participant to think “outside the box” when approaching an everyday problem.

Common Sense Approach

Objective: Using common sense and intuition to solve problems

Participants: Individuals or teams of 4 or more + facilitator

Instructions/Rules: Provide the group with examples of well-known scenarios in which they are asked to individually or as a team come up with the solutions to solving them. The individuals or teams are to share with the group how they solved and/or interpreted the problems.

For example:

Paper Folding: Ask the group to imagine folding a piece of paper in half once. Then with that same piece of paper to fold it in half again, and so on. How many times can this be done?

Answer: 6-7 times is the maximum this can be done practically.

Or ask the group to work out a scenario that doesn't quite make sense and to come up with how they interpret this. For example:

Airline Emergency Exit Seating Instructions: "Exit row seats are only available and offered to passengers 12 years of age and older; who are able to read, understand, and provide oral instructions in English or French; are able to visually assess if it is safe to open the emergency door; are free of any disability, condition, reduction in mobility or responsibility, such as attending to another person, that may prevent them from performing emergency exit functions, and are able to reach and operate the emergency exit and willing to assist in evacuating the aircraft in the event of an emergency. Passengers who attest, at time of booking, that they qualify for sitting in an exit row seat have the obligation of informing [name of airline] should any of these qualifications change after booking."

Potential Comments: How does the airline determine whether the individual is capable of assessing whether it is safe to open the door? Or if there are individuals onboard that speak neither English nor French? What if this was the only remaining seat on the plane and the individual is neither free of disability or is willing to assist and has not disclosed to the airline? etc.

Materials Needed: Paper and writing tools

Timing: 5-7 minutes per scenario + additional discussion time

Outcomes/Goals: Not over relying on their intuition is important in this activity, but using a common sense approach is critical to solving the problems presented. Identification of how

individuals and teams are able to effectively solve everyday problems and some of the creative ways in which they were able to come up with the solutions - whether they are correct or not.

There's More Than One Way to Solve a Problem

Objective: Using multiple methods/approaches to solve a problem.

Participants: Teams of 4 or more + facilitator

Instructions/Rules: Teams are asked to solve specific real-life multidisciplinary problems. Teams are to use problem-solving strategies to generate ideas and choose the best solution/outcome. Depending on the task, teams can complete comprehensive patent and marketability searches and design prototypes.

Materials Needed: Paper and writing tools. Depending on exercise, can also include Lego, modelling clay, building blocks, tubes, etc.

Timing: 20 minutes + additional discussion time

Outcomes/Goals: Multidisciplinary team based problem solving approach to generate ideas in solving a real-life problem. Creativity will be useful along with participants understanding of how to go about using their skills and those of the team to generate ideas.

Origami or Origam-You

Objective: Ability to follow instructions clearly.

Participants: Teams of 4 + facilitator

Instructions/Rules: In teams of 4, each member of the team is provided with a square piece of paper. Each member of the team is asked to go around the table to describe and demonstrate one of the instructions. All team-mates are to conduct the activity together until the figure is completed. Can include multiple rounds of paper folding, increasing the complexity of the activity each time. Allow time at end of each round for teams to describe how they were able to achieve the goal (one strength) and any challenges they faced (one weakness).

Materials Needed: Origami paper or paper cut into squares + printable origami instructions (www.origami-fun.com)

Timing: 5-10 minutes per round + additional time for discussion

Outcomes/Goals: Active listening and learning skills are needed with this task. Individuals have to clearly articulate and demonstrate the instructions to provide themselves and their team-mates with accurate instructions in order to complete the exercise.

Resources

Some activities were adapted from:

www.brown.edu/about/administration/sheridan-center/teaching-learning/effective-classroom-practices/interactive-classroom-activities

education.cu-portland.edu/teaching-strategies/5-problem-solving-activities-for-the-classroom/

www.wrike.com/blog/team-building-games/

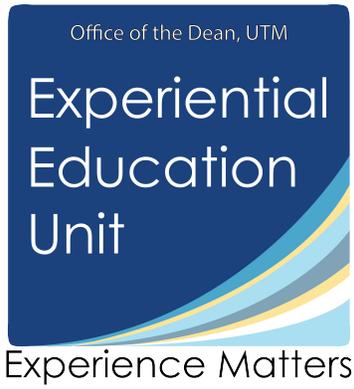
http://sydney.edu.au/education_social_work/groupwork/implement/prepare/team_build.shtml#sthash.v.GnYqOvg.dpuf

https://web.stanford.edu/group/ree/archives/archive07/usa/notes/2004-897_Final.pdf

http://www.heqco.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/HEQCO_WIL_Guide_ENG_ACC.pdf

Additional information:

<http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/lt/resources/handouts/ExperientialLearningReport.pdf>



uoft.me/experience

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