TEAM LEARNING

Session Leader Guide

We all have individual preferences on how we learn best. Some learn best when they plan what to do, while some benefit most from doing. Others learn best from reflecting on what has already been done and then there are those who are at their best when they can connect with others and devise a mutual purpose.

What we all have in common is that as adults we need time and space to debrief and reflect on what we have done in order to augment our earlier beliefs and ingrained principles with new beliefs and values. Often we feel that we have no time for reflection and learning. However, team learning helps each individual envision their self in the change curve, reduce the time it takes to transform and learn and thus enhance the group's ability.

Flexible action and ability to learn collectively is crucial for survival and success in an environment of faster change, and that calls for transformation of our behaviour!

This exercise is built on three main blocks, where the recommendation is to use the first two blocks initially, while the last block could be run on a regular basis. The blocks are:

1. The Prerequisites for Our Learning
2. Team Learning Wheel and Our Learning Styles
3. Team Reflection

This exercise is based upon "The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization" by Senge, P., Roberts, C., Ross, R., Smith, B., and Kleiner, A.

PURPOSE

To collectively enhance your team's ability to transform and learn as you move through the team's life cycle.

OBJECTIVE

At the end of the exercise everyone should be able to learn from what is happening here and now. Then move beyond their own comfort zones and challenge and make real value shifts.

TIME

This varies considerably. Sometimes a short 10-minute reflection gives a lot, while in other cases an entire day or two will be insufficient.
The most important thing here is to create a language and a way of working with your team to achieve team reflection. The team will need time and repetition to include in their shared culture the process of how they learn together.
Time allocation must come from you as the leader – you need to prioritise and give them the go-ahead to use time for reflection.

BEFORE THE SESSION

1. Anchor the decision to do the exercise with the group.
2. Read through the whole Session Leader Guide – the best thing is to try out the exercises yourself first so you know the key steps.
3. Book a meeting room where it is possible to work in pairs in an acceptable way.
4. Send out the invitation for your group meeting at least two weeks before your meeting. Communicate Purpose and Objective, when, where and who will be involved.
5. Select supporting slides to use at the workshop. Review speaker notes and add your own. You can find suggested slides at www.valuescentre.com/getconnected.
6. Try to come at least 20 minutes before everyone else.
7. Write the Purpose, Objective and Agenda on a flip-chart so that everyone can see them during the whole session.

DURING THE SESSION

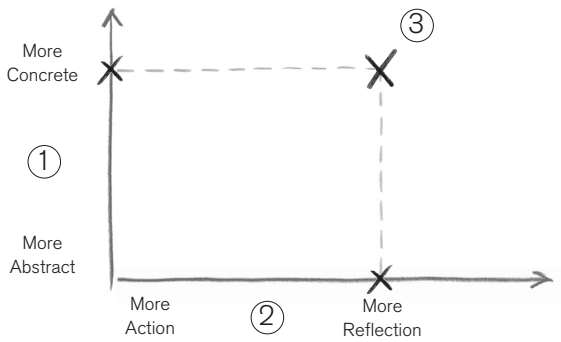
1. Follow the proposed agenda.

Block 1: The Prerequisites for Our Learning

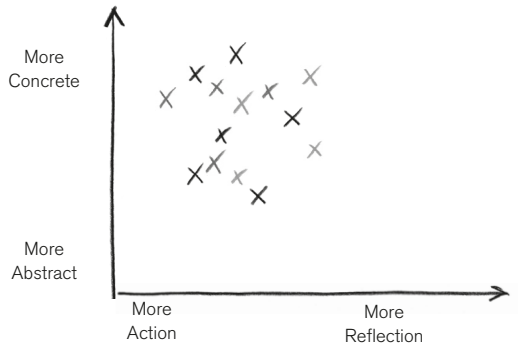
2. Ask the participants to individually reflect on the topic:
"Think of a time in your life when you learned more in a short time than any other time. Describe the situation, your thoughts and feelings"
3. Divide the group into pairs and let them share their reflections.
4. Gather the group again for a whole group reflection on the question:
"What were the prerequisites that made your learning experience so effective?"

Block 2: Team Learning Wheel and Our Learning Styles

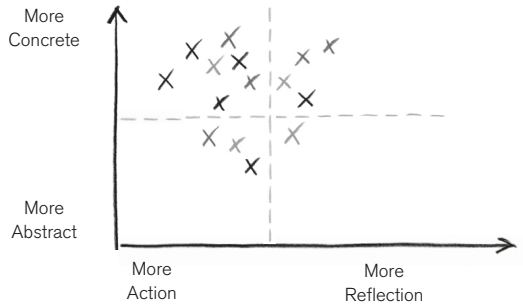
5. Draw up the figure described below on a whiteboard or flip chart. Start by asking everyone to draw the same two axes and labels on a piece of paper. ① Ask them to first judge themselves if they are "More Concrete" or "More Abstract" as a person. Mark with an "X" where they feel it best describes themselves. ② Then ask the same regarding "More Action" or "More Reflection"? Mark with another "X" then draw an horizontal and a vertical line from the two x:es. ③ And make a big "X" in the graph as shown below.



6. Ask each one of the participants to come up and plot their "X"..
   The outcome for the whole group could look similar to the example below.

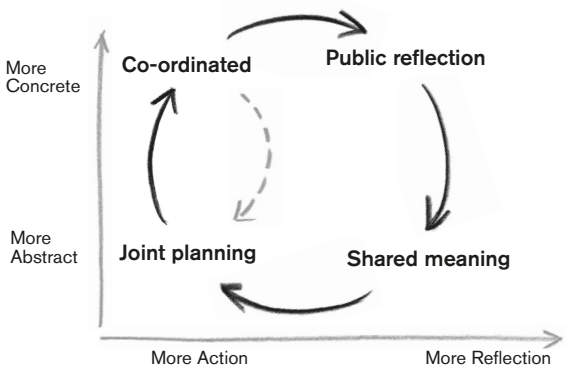


7. Find the centre point at each axis and draw one vertical and one horizontal line from these centre points, as in the figure below.



8. Show and introduce the slide below and let the group reflect on the questions:
   - "What does it say about the group learning style?"
   - "Which are our strengths?"
   - "Which steps do we go through in our daily work? Do we take the shortcut (the dotted gray arrow) or do
     we take time for Public reflection and Shared meaning?"

THE TEAM LEARNING WHEEL



Source: Fifth Discipline - Field book

Block 3: Team Reflection

9. Emphasise the difference between discussion and dialogue (See p. 22). Discussion is based on right and wrong statements whereas dialogue is based on the belief that there is no right and wrong. Good reflection is based on dialogue and fearless statements about what each team member has experienced in terms of feelings, thoughts and learning. A good dialogue emerges easier when "we agree that we don't have to agree".

10. Write on a flipchart what you want the group to reflect on. Choose a situation, an experience or find your own topic or select one from the attached example; "Possible reflective questions" at page 170-171. Encourage clarification and adjustments to what you have written. Try to be specific in time and scope.
11. Ask everyone to work individually for 5 - 7 minutes writing down their own feelings, thoughts and learning about the selected situation or topic.
12. Invite them to start sharing. Encourage and give recognition to everyone who is sharing, especially in the beginning and during the first reflections, in order to diminish fear and build trust in the process. Work with Listening, Voicing, Respecting and Suspending. Focus on exploring and explaining. Don't steer or judge. Trust the process. Welcome whatever emerges.

Wrap up

13. Have a team reflection of what insights the exercise has given, and how it might impact own mindset and ambitions to strengthen skills (look at the attached reflection questions; "Team Follow up & Reflection" on page 172).
    Write down the team reflections on a whiteboard/flip chart so that everyone can see and build on each other's reflections.
14. Let the team conclude what they find as critical for them in order to get a more fruitful learning climate.
15. Ask if everyone can agree to set aside more time for Reflection in their daily work and at meetings. Try also to come to an agreement on how to follow up the agreed intentions.

AFTER THE SESSION

1. Write and send out minutes as soon as possible after the meeting. Enclose the slides you showed (if requested by any of the participants).
2. How do you intend to follow up the session? A good idea is to plan a follow up dialogue.
3. Plan for your next reflection, not too far away in time.

Agenda

(proposal and facilitator notes)

1. Introduction 10 min

Go through Purpose, Objective and Agenda. Be open to questions.

Block 1 (Optional)

2. The Prerequisites for Our Learning 20 – 30 min

Ask the participants to individually reflect on their personal learning experiences. Let them share their reflections in pairs.

3. Group dialogue 10 – 20 min

Let the whole group share and reflect on what were the prerequisites that made their learning experience effective.

Block 2 (Optional)

4. Team Learning Wheel and Our Learning Styles 10 min

Ask everyone to individually reflect on their personal learning style related to the diagram on the flip chart according to the instructions.

5. Group Dialogue 10 – 20 min

Let all the participants try to plot what they regard as where their learning style best fits and continue the exercise according to the instructions. Reflect on the outcome. What do we learn from this picture?

Block 3

6. Team Reflection 20 – 60 min

Note down a topic or use "Open Space" (see page 66) and let the group choose the topic they find most important to reflect upon at this meeting. Let the participants start with individual reflection (5 minutes) and thereafter start to share their reflections in the group. Note down the reflections on a flip chart, so everyone can see them. Remember: The purpose is the reflection, not to reach conclusions.

Wrap up

7. Evaluation of the exercise 20 – 30 min

Have the group reflect on what was the major thing they learned and took away from this exercise and try to agree on how to improve the Team Learning ability in the team.

HANDOUT

Possible reflective questions:

1. Describe a situation where our team really made a difference for ME!

2. Name two things we really need to start doing, in order to use time more effectively.

3. Name two things we really need to stop doing!

4. What's the glue that keeps us together in our team?

5. How can we see and measure progress?

6. What am I really passionate about?

Source: PREERA Consulting

7. What would it take for us to go to the "next level of development" in our team collaboration?

8. What would it take for us to resolve dilemmas with guidance of our vision?

9. What drives me in my life today?

10. What do I need to focus on to create what I think is attainable?

11. What do I think WE need to focus on in order to attain what is possible?

12. What really influences me?

HANDOUT

Team Follow-up & Reflection:

1. What is the most important thing you've learnt during the workshop?

2. Rate your overall impression of the exercise on a scale of 1 - 5 (5=high).
Complement your rating with a short comment.

3. What suggestions for improvement do you see for this workshop?

4. What are your expectations for the next step after this workshop?

5. Other comments