

Teaching Others What You Know

Survival Training for Subject Matter Experts

The SME's Activity Toolkit

*Ways to make your training sessions
more engaging, dynamic, and fun!*



Tailor your training to PEOPLE:



Pinpoint your exact purpose

Examine your audience

Orient your talk to their knowledge and expertise

Partition your material to a few key ideas

Limit your material

Examples! Provide lots of them

Quick and Easy Ice Breakers

Two Truths and a Lie

When participants are introducing themselves, ask them to share two true things about themselves and one lie. The remaining participants (and the trainer) will then try and guess which one is the lie. This exercise is simple to use and establishes a personal atmosphere.

Dreams and Nightmares

Each person states a “dream” about something positive they hope will happen in the class. Each person states a “nightmare” about something negative they hope will not happen in the class. List them on a flip chart so the whole class can read them.

Surprised to Know

Ask everyone in the room to stand. Ask each person to introduce himself or herself by name and then tell the group one thing about themselves that people might be surprised to know. Example: “I once went swimming with manatees” or “I used to be a performer in a circus.”

Ask a question

Simply ask a question of participants such as what do you like to do for fun? Can you describe your dream vacation? If you could have a dinner and invite any three people, alive or deceased, who would you invite? What is your all time favorite movie and why?

Line It Up

Give participants 30-60 seconds to line up in alphabetical order by last name. If two participants share the same last name, use their first names to break the tie. Once the line up is complete, go around the room and ask participants to introduce themselves by saying their name and one thing they expect to get out of the training. (Variation: Ask participants to line up by birth months and date and form a circle instead of a line.)

Group Discussion



Objective

Uses the participant as a resource; develops a sense of group identity; elicits questions.

Time Required

About 10-30 minutes - can easily expand or contract the activity to suit the available time.

Materials Required

- Create your open-ended questions in advance
- Flip chart and markers

Instructions

- Ask an open ended question. Example questions:
 - What are the benefits of product x?
 - How has the market changed in the past six months?
 - What strategies do you use to keep your database up-to-date?
- State the question clearly and repeat it if necessary.
- Allow the participants time to think about their answer. Be sure not to answer your own questions.
- If the answer to the question has more than one correct answer, write answers on flip chart.

Debrief

- What did we learn?
- Why did we work on this activity?
- Stress that there is typically more than one solution and encourage participants to leverage each other's knowledge and experience.

Table Top Activity



Objective

Breaks up a lecture and encourages listening since for a predetermine period of time (20 minutes or less) since they will teach back the key concepts to the class.

Time Required

About 45-60 minutes - can easily expand or contract the activity to suit the available time.

Materials Required

Flip chart and markers

Instructions

- Announce to the class that you will be speaking for the next 20 minutes on a certain topic.
- At the end of 20 minutes, they will work in teams to create a brief presentation of the key points of your talk and will present it to the class.

Debrief

- What did we learn?
- Why did we work on this activity?



Skills Practice

Objective

Offers a safe environment for learning new skills; places most participants at an even level; forces participants to practice the concepts and techniques presented.

Time Required

About 45-60 minutes - can easily expand or contract the activity to suit the available time.

Materials Required

Prepared scenarios (optional) If necessary, prepare specific scenarios in advance. Could create 3-5 different scenarios if the skills practice will take place in front of the entire group (keeps each practice fresh).

Instructions

- Tell participants that they will have an opportunity to practice their newly acquired skills.
- Divide class into groups of three participants each.
 - The first person will play the lead role and practice the skills.
 - The second person will play the supporting role (i.e., customer, employee)
 - The third person be the observer responsible for observing their team mate using the new skills and providing feedback.
- Ensure everyone knows the role they will be playing in the first skills practice.
- Announce the time limit for the skills practice – usually 5-7 minutes.
- At the end of the 5 minutes, give the observers 3 minutes to provide feedback on the use of the new skills.
- Conduct a quick debrief discussion (see Discussion Points).
- Rotate roles two more times so everyone in the triad had a chance to practice the new skills.

Debrief

- What did we learn?
- Why did we work on this activity?
- Ask questions like:
 - “Observers, what did your person do really well?”
 - “What were the key take-aways from the practice?”
- Stress that learning new skills takes practice. Ask participants if they remember what it was like the first time they sat down at a key board and tried to type? It was awkward but they kept at it and now they are much more competent.

Simulation



Objective

Breaks up a lecture and encourages listening since for a predetermine period of time (20 minutes or less) since they will teach back the key concepts to the class.

Time Required

About 45-60 minutes - can easily expand or contract the activity to suit the available time.

Materials Required

Flip chart and markers

Instructions

- Announce to the class that you will be speaking for the next 20 minutes on a certain topic.
- At the end of 20 minutes, they will work in teams to create a brief presentation of the key points of your talk and will present it to the class.

Debrief

- What did we learn?
- Why did we work on this activity?

Case Study



Objective

Offers practical application of concepts; requires active learner involvement. Designed to develop; critical analysis and decision making skills.

Time Required

Varies, depending on complexity of assignment. About 45-60 minutes -can easily expand or contract the activity to suit the available time.

Materials Required

One sample case scenario created in advance.

Instructions

- Tell participants that they will have an opportunity to apply the concepts and develop their skills.
- Allow participants to work individually or as a team, depending on the assignment.
- Provide participants with the appropriate time limit to complete the assignment.
- Once they are done, ask participants to compare their answers/results to another participant and discuss their findings.

Debrief

- What did we learn?
- Why did we work on this activity?
- Provide participants correct answer(s) and ask participants to report how they felt while completing the assignment.

Challenge participants to practice their new problem solving skills as often as possible.

Brainstorming



Objective

Allows participants to share information, best practices, and knowledge.

Time Required

About 40 minutes - can easily expand or contract the activity to suit the available time.

Materials Required

Flip chart paper and markers for each team

Instructions

- Share the rules of brainstorming:
 - No judgment on ideas – there are no “bad” ideas, all ideas should be considered
 - Everyone participates
 - The goal is quantity, not quality
- Break class into teams of 4-6 each.
- One person in the team should be the scribe to record the group’s thoughts on a flip chart page.
- For 15 minutes, the team discusses the topic and allows each person on the team to speak.
- The scribe lists each key point or element on the flip chart.
- At the end of the 15 minutes, each team presents their findings to the remainder of the group.
- Prizes can be awarded for the team with the most ideas or key points.

Debrief

- What did we learn? Summarize the key learning points of the discussion and include any additional key concepts of the topic that may still need to be covered.
- Why did we work on this activity?

Source: Sales Games & Activities for Trainers by Gary B. Connor and John A. Woods

Games



Objective

Breaks up a lecture and encourages listening since for a predetermine period of time (20 minutes or less) since they will teach back the key concepts to the class.

Time Required

About 45-60 minutes - can easily expand or contract the activity to suit the available time.

Materials Required

Flip chart and markers

Instructions

- Announce to the class that you will be speaking for the next 20 minutes on a certain topic.
- At the end of 20 minutes, they will work in teams to create a brief presentation of the key points of your talk and will present it to the class.

Debrief

- What did we learn?
- Why did we work on this activity?

Teach Backs



Objective

Breaks up a lecture and encourages listening since for a predetermine period of time (20 minutes or less) since they will teach back the key concepts to the class.

Time Required

About 45-60 minutes - can easily expand or contract the activity to suit the available time.

Materials Required

Flip chart and markers

Instructions

- Announce to the class that you will be speaking for the next 20 minutes on a certain topic.
- At the end of 20 minutes, they will work in teams to create a brief presentation of the key points of your talk and will present it to the class.

Debrief

- What did we learn?
- Why did we work on this activity?

Lecturette



Objective

Breaks up a lecture and encourages listening since for a predetermine period of time (20 minutes or less) since they will teach back the key concepts to the class.

Time Required

About 45-60 minutes - can easily expand or contract the activity to suit the available time.

Materials Required

Flip chart and markers

Instructions

- Announce to the class that you will be speaking for the next 20 minutes on a certain topic.
- At the end of 20 minutes, they will work in teams to create a brief presentation of the key points of your talk and will present it to the class.

Debrief

- What did we learn?
- Why did we work on this activity?

Quiz



Objective

Breaks up a lecture and encourages listening since for a predetermine period of time (20 minutes or less) since they will teach back the key concepts to the class.

Time Required

About 45-60 minutes - can easily expand or contract the activity to suit the available time.

Materials Required

Flip chart and markers

Instructions

- Announce to the class that you will be speaking for the next 20 minutes on a certain topic.
- At the end of 20 minutes, they will work in teams to create a brief presentation of the key points of your talk and will present it to the class.

Debrief

- What did we learn?
- Why did we work on this activity?

Do you need a BREAK?



Make sure you schedule breaks into your training.

Rule of thumb: For every 1 ½ hours of lecture, provide a 10-15 minute break or a change in routine.

When should you schedule breaks?

- Every 1 ½ to 2 hours.
- Right after a module, unit or lesson of instruction.
- If it's a full day class, schedule time for a lunch break as well as one break in the morning and one in the afternoon.
- Breaks are typically 10-15 minutes in length. Participants need time to use the restroom, make a telephone call, check e-mail or just stretch and walk around.
- Let participants know exactly when to return from break.
- For example: "Its 10:15 right now. Enjoy your break but please return promptly at 10:30, as we will be ready to continue class."
- Use a timer (such as an egg timer) so everyone knows what time to return and how long they have left for the break.
- To help control the "stragglng in syndrome," schedule your breaks to stop and start at odd times, 10:17 AM, for example, and last for an uneven number of minutes, say 13 minutes.

What if you fall behind and don't have time for a break?

- **Ask participants to stand up and stretch:** Say "Let's do a quick "pick-me-up". Ask them to take a deep breath, stretch both arms out and clap their hands or shake their bodies to get the kinks out. It takes no more than 2 minutes and energy is restored in the room.
- **Evaluate your options:** Can you cut out an activity? Are there "nice to know" sections you can cover more briefly than originally planned? Cut out breaks, or shorten them? Can the class run longer than originally planned?
- **Be honest with the participants:** Let them know that you have fallen behind schedule. Suggest ways to make up the time: handle group discussions at end of class, shorten an afternoon break, or speed up the pace of the class.

Want to know more?



Books/Magazines

- Thiagi's Interactive Lectures - Sivasailam Thiagarajan
- 90 World Class Activities by 90 World-Class Trainers – Elaine Biech
- Games Trainers Play - Edward E. Scannell and John W. Newstrom
- 101 Games for Trainers: A Collection of the Best Activities from Creative Training Techniques Newsletter - Bob Pike and Chris Busse
- 201 Icebreakers (Group Mixers, Warm-Ups, Energizers and Playful Activities) by Edie West
- The Icebreaker Cookbook by Nicole Thomas and Freda Hobbs
- Training Treasures (magazine for creative trainers & presenters published 4x per year)
- The Big Book of Humorous Training Games by by Doni Tamblyn & Sharyn Weiss
- Creative Training Techniques Handbook – R.W. Pike
- 99 of the best Experiential Corporate Games we know! By Simon Priest, Sam Sikes And Faith Evans
- A Compendium of Icebreakers, Energizers, & Introductions- Activity Manual
- Presenting With Pizzazz By Sharon Bowman

Websites

- www.trainerswarehouse.com (fun training tools)
- www.icebreakers.ws/ (lots of ideas for icebreakers)
- puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com/ (really cool; a free puzzle maker)
- www.mindtools.com (for brainstorming and problem-solving activities)
- <http://www.businessmarketing.com/store/icebreakers> (business training media)
- <http://www.thiagi.com/> (games and strategies)