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An Introduction To Learning

Grow Your Own People



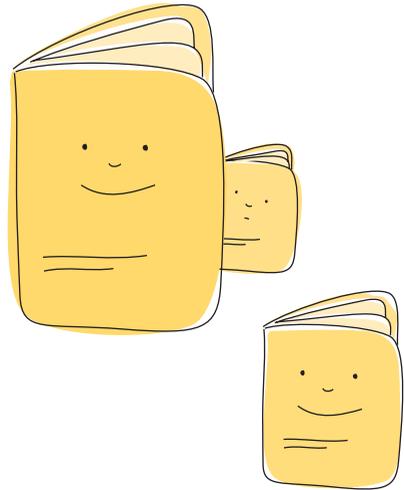
Introduction To Learning

Why Learn?

Try not learning – everyday we learn new things whether we choose to or not. Our brains are designed to take in and store limitless information so we always have the capacity to learn more.

This pack provides activities that will encourage managers in voluntary organisations to raise awareness about lifelong learning. The activities can be used by small groups i.e. a management committee or by individual volunteers.

Although this pack focuses on the development and learning of individuals it can be used with The Big Picture and Putting People in the Picture to help organisations develop and grow. See Other Resources on page 6 for further information.



"People just do a course because it is there – this material will help individuals set goals and link them to what the organisation is trying to achieve."

Tom Anderson
Firth and Mossbank Tenants and Residents Association, Shetland.



Activities

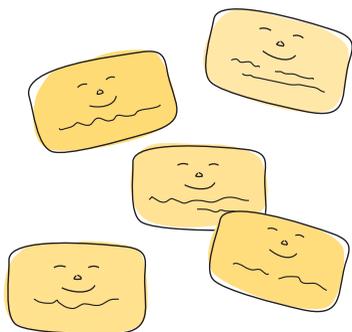
Introducing Learning To An Organisation

75 Ways To Learn

Objective: to introduce participants to a wide variety of learning methods and identify which ones they prefer.

Time: 15-20 minutes.

Group numbers: 2-20 people.



Tools: learning cards - 75 Ways To Learn (N.B. you will need at least 5 cards per participant).

Distribute the cards to each participant. Ask them to look at their cards and decide which method of learning they would prefer. Participants should be encouraged to prioritise their cards as individuals first. They can then form small groups to discuss which card they chose and why. They might also want to consider why individuals have preferred styles of learning. Each participant could then think about how learning could be made easier for everyone in their organisation.

Extra: participants can use these cards when they have identified learning objectives to decide on an appropriate learning method.

Capture Effective Learning

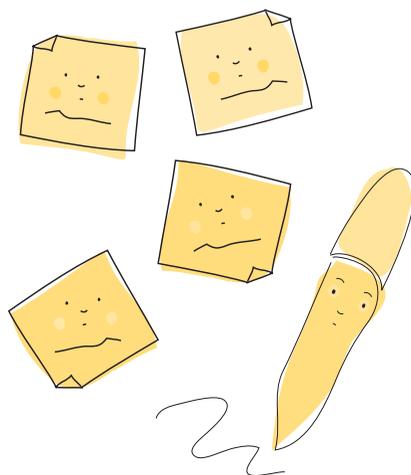
Objective: to encourage individuals to discuss when learning has worked well in their lives.

Time: 15 minutes (then up to 20 minutes for discussion).

Group numbers: 2-20 people.

Tools: post-it notes and pens.

Ask participants to discuss in pairs or groups of three, a time when learning worked well in their lives. Give them 10-15 minutes to do this. Then ask them to write key words (one word per post-it) that



explain what makes learning work for them. Put these post-its up on the wall and ask them how these things can be introduced in their organisation. You will probably find that many of the words will refer to attitudes about learning – this will encourage the group to reflect on the organisation's culture of learning.

Fly To Success

Objective: to encourage participants to identify what would make them better at their role in the organisation.

Time: 15-30 minutes.

Group numbers: this is an exercise carried out by individuals.

Tools: the balloon master from 'Getting Started With The Big Picture' (see Other Resources).



It may be necessary to do a session looking at individual's roles and responsibilities prior to this exercise.

Give individuals a copy of the balloon and ask them to think about what would help them fly in their role. Who could they have on board the balloon to help them succeed – or be better at their role? Is there anything that would hold them back?

How Do We Learn?

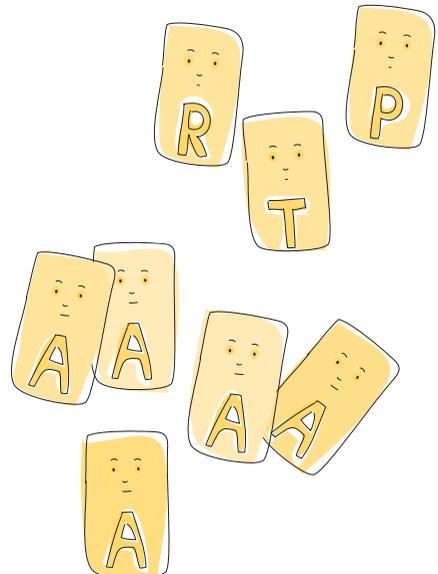
We all have different styles of learning and most people prefer one style to another.

Learning Styles

Objective: to identify an individual's preference for learning and recognise that people are different.

Time: 15-20 minutes for the activity followed by a 10 minute presentation on learning styles.

Group numbers: 3-20 people.



Tools: the Learning Style Cards. These will need to be photocopied so that each person has at least 10 cards. You will also need the Learning Styles acetate and handout.

This exercise is similar to 75 Ways To Learn and it is therefore suggested that you don't do them both in the same session. Give each participant 10-15 cards. Ask them to identify which ones describe their preferred way of learning. They should then negotiate and swap any cards they don't like with another member of the group. Give them 10-15 minutes to do this.

Then ask each individual to look at their cards and focus on the letter on the back - group the letters together - do they have more of one than another? The letters stand for each of the following learning styles:

Activist Pragmatist Theorist Reflector

Use the handout Learning Styles to give the participants more information on this. Discussion can take place regarding how individual learning preferences relate to what the organisation needs them to learn.

Communicating What We Need To Learn

Writing Measurable Objectives

Objective: to write measurable objectives.

Time: 5 minute presentation and 10 minutes practise.

Group numbers: 1-20 people.

Tools: the Shopping List Of Objectives For Individual Learning Plans.

Explain that it is much easier to measure achievement in an organisation if you know exactly what you want to learn. Make a list of measurable objectives using the words on the shopping list.

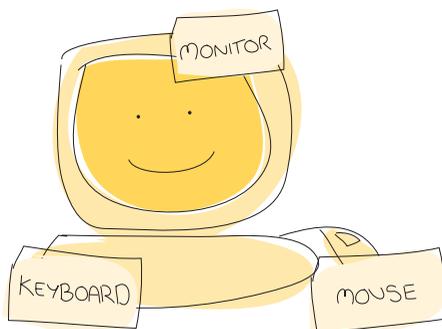
N.B. Each word on the list should be used at the start of the line as illustrated opposite:

E.g. Using the computer could generate the following tasks:

Label the key parts of the office computer.

Explain how the computer could be used for office tasks.

Manage the volunteer database.



Monitoring And Evaluating Learning

Costing Learning - Counting The Beans

Objective: to compare the value of learning against money, time and people satisfaction/effort.

Time: 20-45 minutes.

Group numbers: 1-12 people.



Tools: you will need the Learning Beans handout and some form of voting tokens (20-30 per person) – you could use dried beans or matchsticks.

Identify from previous exercises what the learning activities are to be and write these as measurable objectives. Give each person participating 20 voting tokens. Ask them what they think the learning would cost in terms of money, time and people satisfaction/effort (N.B. people can be any of the stakeholders i.e. service users, other volunteers, staff or funders). The voting system is 1 token for low input and 5 tokens for high input. Remember this exercise only illustrates the participant's perception of things and is not an actual measurement.

The exercise should then be repeated looking at the benefits or outcomes of the learning activities. The two sides are then compared. Discussion can then take place regarding the value of the learning to the individual and the benefits to the organisation.

Repeating this exercise at a later date after the learning has taken place could also be useful.

Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is

Objective: to prioritise a budget to maximise learning in the organisation.

Time: 20-45 minutes.

Group numbers: 1-8 people.

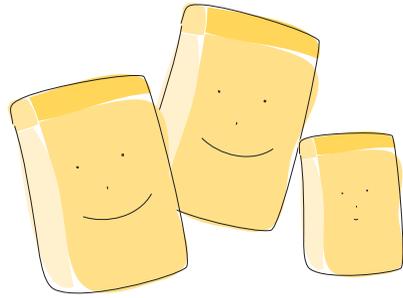
Tools: the money master from 'Getting Started With The Big Picture' (see Other Resources).

Add a monetary value to the sheet i.e. £10 or £100, and photocopy it to represent the training budget of the organisation. Ask the group to cost the learning that individuals have identified. Encourage participants to find alternative solutions to high cost learning by using 75 Ways To Learn to help with the discussion.



Other Resources

- **The Big Picture** is an organisational learning framework. It has 24 strands many of which will support individual learning in an organisation. The handbook costs £45 for Voluntary Organisations and £66 for Non Voluntary Organisations.
- **The Getting Started Pack** contains a booklet looking at issues around getting started, facilitation tools to use during a Big Picture training session and handouts and visual aids. The pack costs £10 for Big Picture holders and £25 for non Big Picture holders.



- **Putting People In The Picture** supports the Managing People, Volunteer and Paid Staff strands of The Big Picture. It is also a useful tool for organisations working towards gaining the liP Standard and those interested in maintaining it. A copy of the handbook costs £5. Alternatively you can view the on-line version at www.scvo.org.uk

For further information on **Learning Styles** please visit the website www.peterhoney.com or phone 01628 633 946.

All of these resources are available from:

The Publications Department,
SCVO,
Mansfield Traquair Centre,
15 Mansfield Place,
Edinburgh, EH3 6BB.
Tel: 0131 556 3882,
Fax: 0131 556 0279
E-mail: enquiries@scvo.org.uk

Further information on The Big Picture and Getting Started can also be found on the website www.thebigpic.org.uk