

Handicaps

Their use in Learning Communities Activities

Facilitators give "handicaps" to group participants as a way of changing or increasing a challenge so that participants get the most out of the activity. Below are some examples of handicaps that might be used.

Blind - Participant blindfolded or asked to keep eyes closed.

Nonverbal/Muted - Participants are unable to speak to each other. One person may be muted to keep him or her from taking over the group.

Paralyzed - Participants are unable to use one of their arms or legs.

Siamesed - Participants are hooked together and must move together.

Singled Voice - Participants can only talk through another person.

Questions - Participants may only ask questions rather than make statements.

Killer and Suicide Questions - Killer statements are ones like: "This won't work."; "That's a dumb idea." and suicide statements are ones like: "I can't do this, "I'll never get over the wall." One or two of the participants are asked to make either of these types of statements to observe the effect on the group process. It's good to not let this go on for more than five or ten minutes. Then stop the group and ask them what they noticed.

Confusion Technique - Participants are asked to say the opposite of what someone else says.

Prescribing the Symptom - A participant or two is asked to do the role he or she normally plays, especially when it's an unproductive role. Prescribing the symptom makes them conscious of what they are doing and what effect it may have on the other group members.