



PRO-SKILLS TOOL BOX

"Game is knowledge, emotion and action"

In order to promote the Pro-Skills methodology, based on innovative teaching approach, the Pro Skills "Tool Box" is offered and prepared: here it is possible to find several tools to reach aims and objectives of the training session on personal, social and self-management skills.

Trainers who want to use these games and exercises have to remember that they are part of a training concept and it is necessary to refer on Pro-Skills philosophy and methodology (see also page 13 of Pro-Skills concept: Methodological principles).

The tool box offers learning activities that can create relational experience, rich of intensive emotions and complex by a cognitive point of view.

If the learning experience would be effective it might offer continuity with life experience (Dewey 1929): It is necessary to help learners to find the relation between what they have learnt in the training session and their past and future experiences in the real life. This is the characteristic of effective learning experience.

The tool box offers games, activities and exercises to create experience condition.

In the following, we give short advice concerning

- Planning the activity
- Choosing an exercise
- After an exercise: debriefing
- Phases of the analysing process
- Trainers final evaluation

Bibliography

Dewey J. (1929). *Experience and education*. MacMillian
Costigan Lederman, Linda (1992). *Simulation and Gaming*. Sage Publications Inc.



PLANNING THE ACTIVITY

When planning an activity, you can refer to the Pro-Skills training concept that offers six training modules:

- Module 1: Pro-Skills Philosophy
- Module 2 - 4: modules on personal, social & self-management skills
- Module 5: Practice - a practical implementation of what was learned
- Module 6: Reflection & evaluation

To conduct the modules with the active methodology, you can use the tool box and choose games, activities, exercises.

CHOOSING AN EXERCISE

It is necessary to plan the activities for each session or module taking into account:

- objectives of the session/module
- objective of learning by a cognitive, behavioural and emotional point of view
- group characteristics
- time limits
- if other important resources are available (materials, space, tools)

In the Pro-Skills tool box, you find games and activities for each module (personal, social and self-management skills). The specific skills that are implicated in that game or activity are mentioned at the top of each tool:

(e.g. Module: Personal skills; Section: Self confidence)

Of course the skills are interlinked and categorising them as personal, social or self-management skills is not always clear-cut.

For each activity there is a description of:

- time frame
- location
- number of participants
- materials
- procedure
- goal / purpose
- questions for discussion



In order to plan an activity it is important to consider:

- which resources in terms of energy, time, materials, space are necessary to create the right condition for the experience?
- which kind of relationships are in the group – is it possible to promote an open exchange or are there others condition that are important to take into account?
- which is the goal in terms of learning? - the learning objective has cognitive, emotional and behavioural aspects: how will the exercise work on these dimension?

When planning an activity it is also important to consider the time after the exercise, to reflect with participants on the experience they have done.

Trainers have to be aware of the possible effects and impacts of the experience and they have to involve the group in the reflection process because this is a condition of the learning methodology.

AFTER AN EXERCISE: "Debriefing"

After the experience in the game, it is necessary to have a "debriefing": in this process, people who got experiences with the game are lead through an intentional discussion about it in order to reflect and to exchange the sense of it.

The negotiation on the meaning of the experience among participants is central.

Anyway after an exercise or activity, participants usually talk naturally and spontaneously about the experience because they need to do. It is important to use this spontaneous process and conduct it to understand and give a sense to what happened, related to the objectives of the training.

It is possible and useful to foresee and guide this process and give relevance to some elements and part of discussion with a systematic method.

There must be two conditions:

- the participation in the experience has a meaningful effect for the participants
- analysis of experience is necessary to have an insight on it and on its impact

The goal is to use the experience to have a learning process, to learn by the analysis of the experience, to stimulate participants to express what they have learnt.

So through this process it is possible to learn how to reflect on experiences and to learn by them. It is possible to guide the discussion in the group, giving some question and using the experience as basis for the analyzing process.



PHASES OF THE ANALYZING PROCESS:

PHASE 1: Reflection and systematic analysis

Ask participants to reflect on the experience:

- invite them to talk about
- set up some rules for the discussion
- define what happened
- define what kind of experience it was

PHASE 2: Intensification and personalization

Acknowledge and underline the reflections of participants defining their meaning in relation with experience

- participants describe their experience, their emotion, thoughts, meaning
- define what is the effect of the experience for them

PHASE 3- Generalization and application

Explore the connection between the learning experience with possible application and wider implication

- generalization
- define models
- discuss implication and application
- clear up facts, concept, principles
- give individual feedback
- close the discussion, summarize results and findings

TRAINERS FINAL EVALUATION

Also trainers need to reflect on their role and their method while conducting the experience in order to understand and to evaluate if the activity proposed were effective and to find possible implication or adaptation when conducting an exercise or game with a specific group.

The debriefing process helps also trainers to know deeply and evaluate the effectiveness of an activity or exercise.

The trainer can ask himself:

- Why was this activity proposed?
- How do I feel while conducting the activity?
- Have participants reached the learning goals and objectives?
- What could be more effective in the exercise?
- How was the experience for the participants?
- Is there something that I can use or recall for other learning experiences?

Doing all these process - planning activity and analysing it - lets trainers be aware more and more on the important dimensions and aspects implicated when using active methods and how to take care of the learning group through them.