

Trust

Most people are familiar with sitting in row behind a desk, listening passively to the sage on the stage lecture. Forming small discussion groups, doing exercises, or playing learning games takes many people out of their comfort zone, and requires trust.

How much trust depends on how much personal risk and personal disclosure you are asking of the participants. Obviously, exercises that aim at self-discovery require more time and attention to build trust between the participants and the facilitator and among the participant group.

Invitation

Create an invitation to participate, not a compulsion. Allowing people to opt out contributes to safety. When someone doesn't want to participate in an exercise, I invite him or her to be an observer. While they may not participate directly, the observer role involves them in learning.

Appropriate introduction

Tell people about the territory you'll cover. Many people are wary of participating in an exercise when they don't know the purpose. Don't have to give away all the details or tell people what they'll learn. Do give people a broad outline, for example: "We'll use a simulated project to explore how teams learn to work together."

Clear start and end

Let people know when the simulation starts and when it ends. If the simulation involves role-playing, ask people to step out of their roles at the end of the simulation.

Debrief

A debrief helps people extract the learning from a simulation or interactive exercise. Without a debrief, people are just playing a game; they aren't engaged in learning.

There's an art to debriefing experiential exercises. However, even a simple debrief protocol can help extract learning from the experience. The debrief helps the group connect the experience of the simulation to existing cognitive frameworks. Ask open-ended question, guide the discussion, and offer examples, insights, stories, and strategies.

Here's a debrief protocol based on the natural flow of how people process information.

Start with the data.

- What stood out for you?
- What did you see and hear?
- What happened?

If you noticed something relevant to the concept under discussion that the participants don't surface, ask "Who else noticed....?" Once you draw attention to the event, some

participants will remember the event, even if it seemed insignificant to them when the event occurred.

Ask what had emotional resonance (without asking “How did you feel?”).

- Where were you surprised?
- Where did you struggle?
- Where did your group really take off?

The moments that provoke emotional responses are often the most ripe for learning. Ask questions that pinpoint those emotional moments.

Ask for insights.

- What does this mean to us as a team?
- What does this tell us about the ScrumMaster’s role?

This part is about analysis and synthesis. This is where we usually start in Western culture. Starting with analysis leads to superficial insights and glosses over the varied experiences of the participants.

Ask for concrete resolves.

- How will this change the way you approach _____?
- What will you do differently?
- How will you apply _____?

Ask the participants to formulate a concrete action that they will take in their own environment to apply what they have learned. Articulating the resolve makes it more likely that people will try a new concept or practice.

A Template for Experiential Exercise Design

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Topic: <Topic description>

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GOAL:

<Description of the goal of the simulation>

GUIDANCE:

- Pre-conditions
- Boundaries
- Assumptions

TIMING AND EXERCISE DETAIL FOR <Topic>:

- **EXERCISE KICKOFF** – *Explaining the Exercise*
 - 5 minute exercise explanation:
 - Purpose of the exercise
 - How teams will work
 - What materials will be used
 - ...
 - How to Demo and Review at the end of the simulation

- **EXERCISE Part 1** – *<Goal>*

- **EXERCISE Part 2** – *<Goal>*

- **EXERCISE Part 3** – *etcetera*

Total timing = ~xminutes

EVENT DETAIL:

For each exercise in the simulation, describe the following:

- **EXERCISE Part n:** <Goal of exercise part n>
 1. ...
 2. ...
 3. ...

Additional Facilitator Guidelines:

Provide a list will instructions, preparations etc. for the Facilitator.

1. ...
2. ...
3. ...

PROPS:

Teams (no more than x people per team) need the following items:

- Flipcharts
- Flipchart markers
- Sticky Notes
- ...
- ...

VARIATIONS:

1. For larger groups:
 -
2. For more time:
 -
3. For teams unfamiliar with Scrum:
 -
4. For teams practicing the Scrum Master role:
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