Educating for a change

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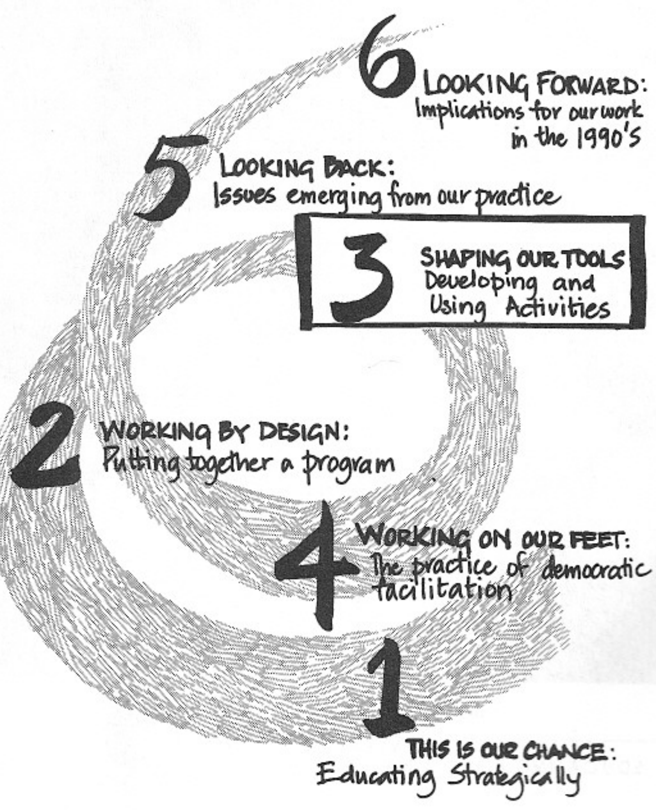
Shaping Our Tools: Developing and Using Activities



As you've worked through this book so far, there may have been a lingering question echoing in the back of your mind: "This is fine – but I have an event to plan for next week. How can I get started, get out people's experience, find the patterns, add new theory and information, practise skills, make strategies, and plan for action, and evaluate? Give me some examples."

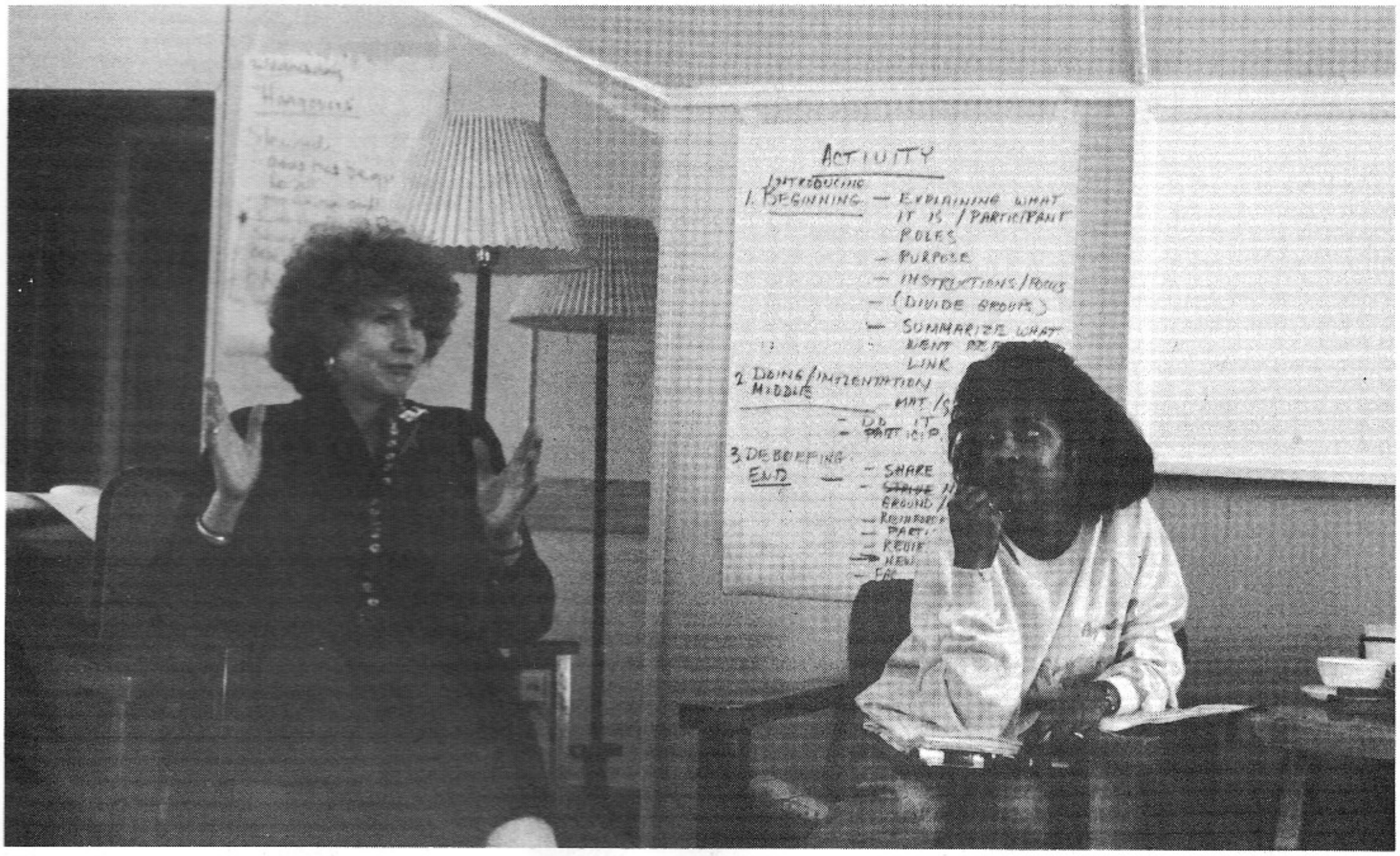
In this chapter we begin answering this question by outlining some of the activities we've used at the various stages of the spiral design model.

First we want to clarify what we mean by "an activity". Here's why. . . .

We were in the second day of a five-day program with community educators. We had introduced the spiral design model, made some progress with the worksheet on objectives, and were moving into designing a piece of an educational event. One of the facilitators went to the flip-chart and asked: "What are the steps in any activity?"

There was silence until someone said, "Getting out experience" and someone else said, "Planning". The facilitator, a little flustered, began to write down what soon became a jumbled list of items.

After a few minutes of this it became clear that we had made an incorrect assumption: the term "activity" was ***not*** *commonly understood by everyone.*



VALERIE ALIA

ACTIVITIES AND HOW TO CHOOSE THEM

What is an activity?

For us, an "activity" is a tool we use to meet an objective in an educational event.

We divide activities into three types:

- ✧ presentations
- ✧ guided discussions
- ✧ structured activities

Many people continue to be most comfortable with the **presentation,** either verbal or audio-visual. The **guided discussion** requires skill in ensuring broad participation and finding the right questions. The **structured activity** (role-playing for example) can be the most dynamic activity but many educators see it as having the highest risk factor.

In the following pages we are referring only to structured activity. But in fact a mix of all three kinds of activities is often what's needed to make sure your program relates to the learning styles of all the participants.

Structured activities most often involve breaking down a body of participants (ideally anywhere from fifteen to twenty-five people) into smaller groups. Whatever the mode of activity (role-play, drama, doing drawings, or just straight discussion), we usually ask participants to consider several questions prepared in the design phase.

Steps or moments in an activity

One way to begin is to dissect an activity into its component parts.

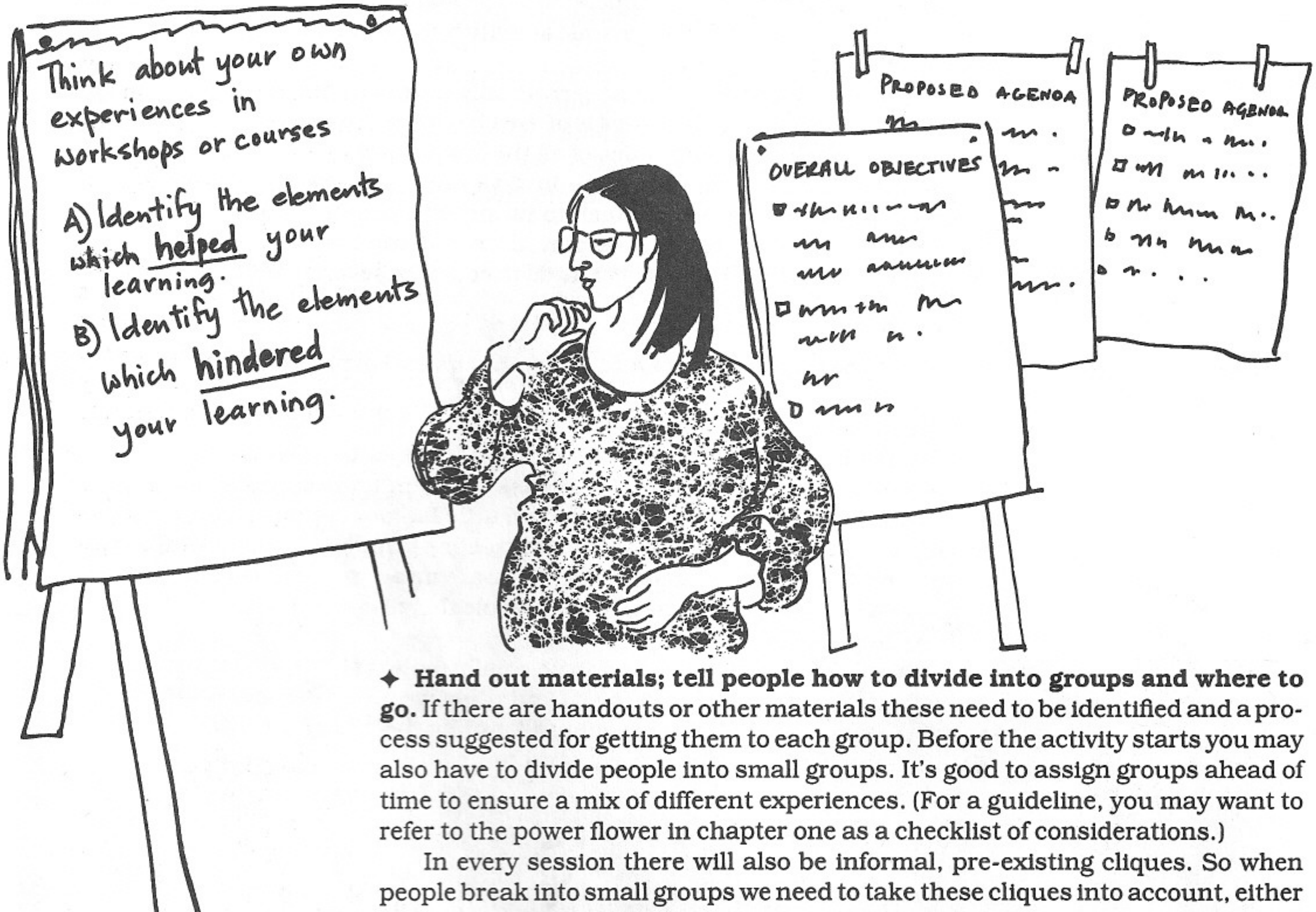
1. Introduction: explaining the activity

✦ **Give the background to the activity and its objective.** We usually begin by explaining to participants why we are asking them to do the activity. In these opening remarks we sometimes include a little history or background if appropriate, or we try to allay any possible fears. For example, in the introduction to drama or role-play we emphasize that there are no acting awards given and that for those who don't want to take a leading role there is always a bit-part – a palm tree, perhaps.

We've also found that we need to be comfortable with the activity if we are to help others feel comfortable doing it. And when we introduce an activity we can afford to wander a little at the beginning, but by the end of the introduction we need to be very precise about the instructions.

✦ **Explain the guidelines, the task, and the time available.** Participants need to know exactly what they are being asked to do. We often write the task – which often involves considering a list of questions related to the topic – on a flip-chart so everyone can see it.

If people will be working in different rooms, or if the task is complicated, we hand out a tasksheet to each person. The tasksheet includes the question to be discussed/worked at; how the work is to be recorded; what should be reported back to the full group; how much time people have. (There's a sample tasksheet in the "Nightmares" section of this chapter.) Check with the group to make sure members understand the task and are willing to engage in it. Leave room for questions.



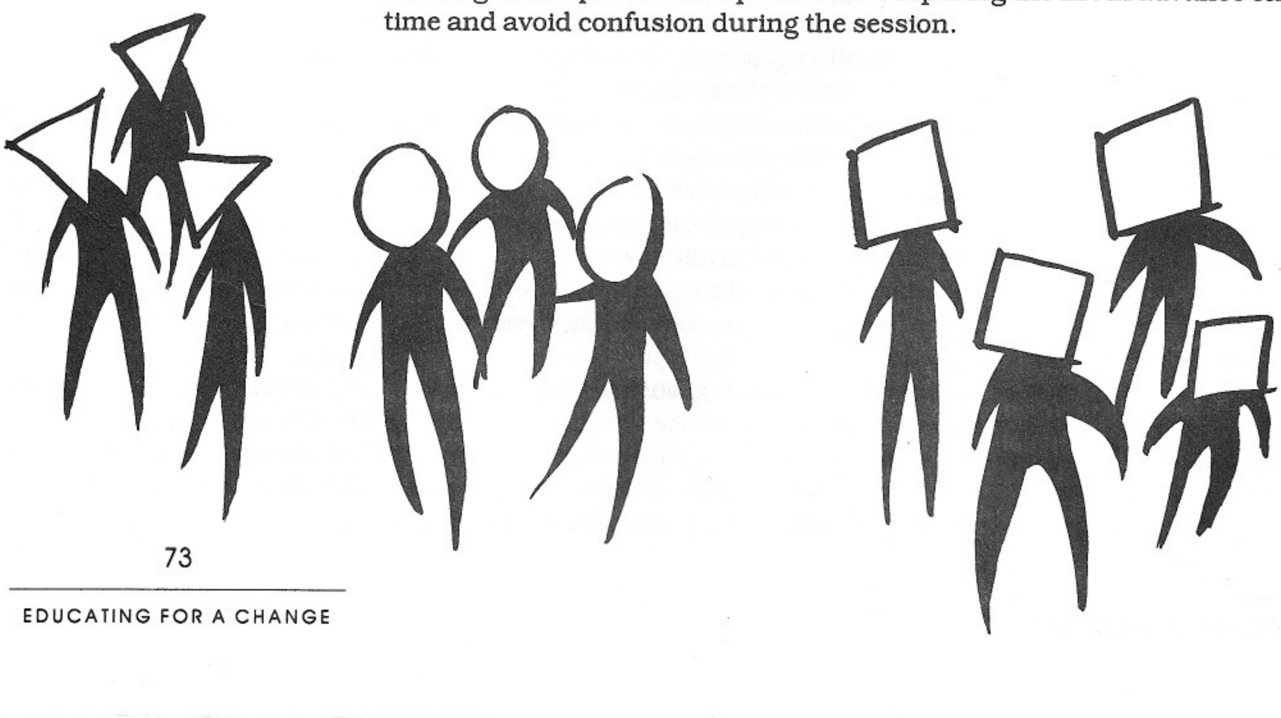
✦ **Hand out materials; tell people how to divide into groups and where to go.** If there are handouts or other materials these need to be identified and a process suggested for getting them to each group. Before the activity starts you may also have to divide people into small groups. It's good to assign groups ahead of time to ensure a mix of different experiences. (For a guideline, you may want to refer to the power flower in chapter one as a checklist of considerations.)

In every session there will also be informal, pre-existing cliques. So when people break into small groups we need to take these cliques into account, either to encourage people to mix or to take advantage of existing relationships.

For a longer program we like to have two or three ways to divide people into groups. Don't forget that you'll need to be clear about where each group can work, but this information is better given after people are divided into groups. Otherwise they often don't remember where to go.

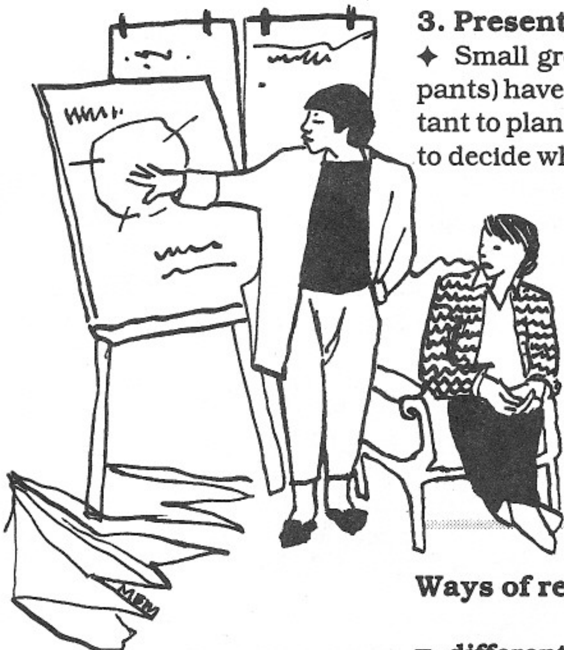
Ideas for dividing people into groups

- **number off by the number of groups you need.** So for a session of twenty people where you want to form four small groups, participants would number off from one to four. Have people group afterwards by number into the four groups.
- **by symbols.** Prepare pieces of paper with as many different symbols as you need groups. If you want to form four groups of five people you might have five triangles, squares, circles, and rectangles. Each person picks a symbol and finds others with the same symbol.
- **self-selection.** When you want people to divide into groups according to their interest in a topic or theme, you can post the topics in different places on the wall around the room. Ask participants to "vote with their feet" by going to the topic that most interests them. If there are too many people for any given theme, you can subdivide the group. If there is no interest in a given topic, it doesn't get discussed.
- **by sound.** This is useful for later in a longer program after people have got to know one another and won't feel self-conscious. It uses the same process as the symbol method, although this time each person gets a piece of paper describing a sound. Participants find their group by moving around the room, making the sound. To make it even more interesting people can do the activity with their eyes closed. We use animal sounds, machine sounds, baby sounds – use your imagination, have fun!
- **pre-formed groups.** Sometimes you need to have a particular mix of people for specific purposes; so you list the group members and where they will be working on a flip-chart and post them. Preparing the list in advance can save time and avoid confusion during the session.



2. Preparing the activity

✦ When participants are working at something – preparing a role play, engaging in a discussion to draw together ideas or prepare a report – we, as facilitators, usually do not participate in the activity because our presence can impede or distract the group's own work. In these situations the role of the facilitator is to be a resource person, to clarify instructions, and to help out any group having difficulties. We also have to watch the clock.



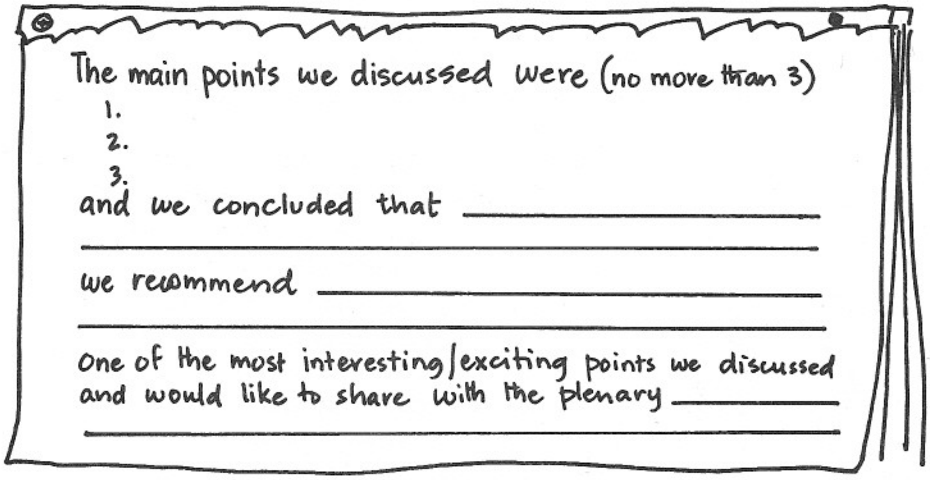
3. Presenting and discussing the activity

✦ Small groups report back to the larger group. Most educators (and participants) have experienced more than their share of boring plenaries. So it's important to plan carefully just how to get the most out of the larger group discussion: to decide what needs to be shared and how.

Ways of reporting back from small groups

- **different questions from each group.** Each group reports back on a different question. All the questions are covered once.
- **only one question reported back.** Groups report back on only one of the questions discussed (the key question). Notes on other questions might be posted so other groups can take a look at them during a break.
- **different forms of report back.** Each group can be asked to use a different form of report back (visual, dramatic, verbal, song etc.) or can choose the form the members feel most comfortable with.
- **simultaneous plenaries.** We use this method when small groups have prepared skits or dramatic presentations and the group as a whole is too large for everyone to see all of the presentations. We break the main body of participants into as many large groups as we need, with one facilitator and three to four presentations in each. All of these mini-plenaries can take place at the same time.
- **gallery review.** Each group posts its material and participants walk around this instant gallery to see what others have done. A representative of each group should remain with that group's work to help answer questions from other participants. You can also leave space in the group's charts for comments or questions from the other participants.

- **a common format.** About fifteen or twenty minutes before the end of the small-group discussion period, you ask each group to focus on its report back and to synthesize the discussion. You can provide a sample format:



It helps to emphasize to participants that this format is not to be taken as a formula to be strictly followed.*

- **no report back.** Sometimes, due to time constraints or the nature of the discussion, it is not possible or necessary to hear back from the small groups – although, in our experience, this does not happen very often. In a plenary it's also possible to ask for comments from the floor on the key points or issues raised.
- **Pulling out the experience.** After the small groups return to the plenary, the next step involves asking questions about the small-group work that will make sure participants describe the experience and identify patterns.

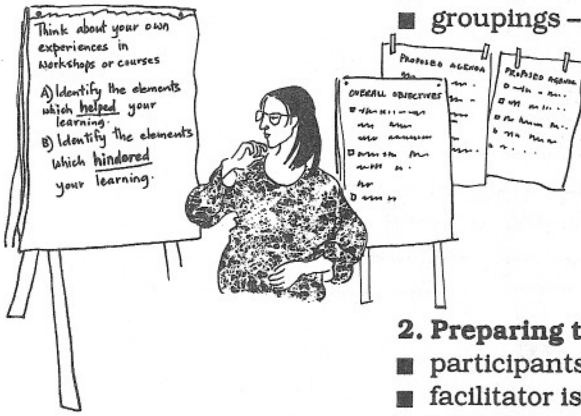
  Questions for this step might be: What are your findings? What are your key learnings or insights?
- **Looking for patterns/analysis.** This is the meat of any activity. After all the reports have been completed, you can ask a number of questions about what's been reported: What are the similarities and the differences? What helped or hindered? Who benefited? Who lost? What are the key shared concerns? What issues should we focus our discussion on now?
- **Add new content/theory.** After the analysis of participant experience we can introduce new content or theory, either through a brief facilitator presentation or a handout.
- **Synthesis.** The final step in any activity is the summary or synthesis of the most important points that emerged in the discussion. Participants and facilitators can work together to name key issues in summary form.

* Thanks to Lily Mah-Sen, who contributed this idea.

Steps or moments in an activity

1. Introduction: explaining the activity

- explain the objectives of the activity
- give the history/background of the activity if appropriate
- explain the task and the time available, checking for clarity and consent
- identify and distribute materials/handouts if any
- groupings – how to divide and where to go



2. Preparing the activity

- participants work at something, often in groups (preparation)
- facilitator is available as a resource or to clarify
- facilitator monitors time

3. Presenting and discussing the activity

- if in small groups, come back to larger group
- pull out the experience
- look for patterns/analysis
- add new content/theory
- synthesis

Deciding on an activity

The activities we draw on are limited only by our ability to create and re-create them. It's possible to borrow and adapt activities from many different sources. For instance, the "liberal" education stance, with its strength in the development of participatory activities, offers teambuilding and communications activities that we've found particularly adaptable for more social or political purposes.

For instance, an activity developed by University Associates, California, a training centre in the liberal tradition, stresses the importance of visual communication. One participant describes what's in a map, without the aid of visuals, and other participants try to draw the map from what they hear. A DMI member adapted the same activity for a strike course. He had one trade unionist in a group describe a plant layout and where picket lines should go; and got the other members to do a drawing of what they heard.

The facilitator used the same process and made the same point about the importance of visual communication. But he also used the tool to meet an organizing objective – to familiarize people with the picket lines.

The problem for many of us becomes how to decide what you need for a specific group at a specific time to meet a specific objective. The activities you use also need to take into account the local context and the availability of technology and resources. This is where it helps to have some of the participants or group representatives involved in the planning.

Participants in past workshops have contributed to this checklist of things to consider.

A checklist for developing appropriate activities

Consider

- the local context
- the number of participants
- who the participants are: their cultural background, sector, social class, race, gender, traditions
- the comfort level: will participants feel uncomfortable doing the activity at this stage in the event?
- objectives
- the design: at what point in the workshop should you do this activity? Should you use it to draw out participant experience, analyse a topic, add new information, or make an action plan?
- the time of day
- the time you have available
- language/level and literacy
- space, logistics
- the materials and technology available/required
- theme/subject matter
- the resources available to you
- participant experience, how much they know about the theme
- organizational context (timing, who is involved)
- your nightmares, and potential resistance to the activity

But we've found that there is another way in which people come at this question of activities. Educators may have experienced or read about a particular activity that they want to use. Is it suitable for the specific situation? An activity grid can help answer that question. The grid does not pretend to include all possibilities. Again, we are emphasizing structured activities because most of the questions we get refer to that category.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives	Paired interview	Role play: prepared script	Role play: participant created ①	Skits	Stop drama ②	Sculpture	Collage	Drawing	Song writing	Video participant work	Presentation: verbal ③	Presentation: audio visual	Small group tasks	Buzz groups ④	Warm up exercises ⑤	Case studies	Storytelling	Written handouts	Brainstorming	Line ups ⑥	Flip chart processing	Stopping the process	Questionnaire	Ads	Photostories
1. Get to know each other	X												X	X	X		X			X					X
2. Introduce a theme		X		X							X						X		X						
3. Get out expectations													X	X						X	X		X		
4. Get out participant knowledge/experience			X	X			X	X	X				X				X				X				X
5. Find patterns in experience							X	X	X				X								X				X
6. Analyze a theme		X				X					X		X											X	X
7. Add new information/theory		X									X	X				X	X	X			X				
8. Practise skills			X		X					X			X			X									
9. Stategize & plan for action			X		X	X							X	X		X			X		X				
10. Reflect on process/evaluate	X												X	X							X		X		X
11. Open and heal tensions					X															X		X			
12. Deal with sluggishness				X											X										
13. Have fun			X	X			X	X							X									X	X
14. Build personal confidence among quiet participants	X									X			X	X											
15. Synthesize main points						X			X		X	X						X			X			X	X
16. Introduce perspectives/voices not in the room		X					X					X				X	X	X							X

① see "Nightmares" pg 86 ② for example see pg100 ③ There are many kinds of presentations: single speaker, panel etc.
④ quickly formed small groups to share ideas within a limited timeframe ⑤ for example pg 81, 83, 109, 110
⑥ for example see pg 102

Reshaping an activity

Just as we have done with activities found here and there, we encourage you to plagiarize, reshape, and adapt our favourite activities to meet the needs of your own participants, themes, and objectives. We also hope that you will tell us about your new creations – so we can steal back from you as well.

We begin with a cautionary note. Using an activity is a bit like singing a folk song: we never use an activity exactly the same way twice. Each time we do a session with a different group of people – or even with the same group, but on a different theme or at a different moment in its organizational history – we rework the activity.

For example, when we work in landlocked areas, we remodel an introductory activity called "lifeboats" into one called "buses". You need to bring your own sense of the group and your own creative energy to this task of adapting – and that will make it more successful.

We've outlined the activities on separate pages to help make photocopying easier. And we've grouped them according to the stages of our spiral design model. There is also one category here that was not part of the spiral model: "Activities for energizing facilitators and participants". These are exercises we use during the session when energy is low, which often happens in mid-afternoon or when there has been too much of one kind of activity.

There are lots of other sources of activities you can consult, and we've included some of these in the bibliography. We have identified the source of each activity to the best of our knowledge: our apologies if we are unaware of having adapted someone else's work, and please do let us know so we can credit the original creators.

RICK ARNOLD

GETTING STARTED

Buses or lifeboats: an introductory exercise

Why use it?
- to begin to get to know each other
- to have fun and relax
- to get a social X-ray of all of us as a group

Time it takes
- 15-30 minutes

What you need
- a large space, clear of furniture

How it's done
1. We ask everyone to stand up and come to the space chosen for the exercise.
2. We explain the objective. We usually mention that this activity is not intended to give people an in-depth introduction to each other; but it may introduce issues we will want to pursue later in greater depth.
3. We give the directions, with a short introduction appropriate to the group. We say, for example, "There's a social evening on Saturday in the city, and we will all have to travel by bus. So we thought we'd begin with some practice getting into the same bus – given that we come from so many different sectors and regions."
4. We explain they'll be asked to form buses in different ways. For example, "The men in one bus and the women in another". Or, "Get into buses by the region you live in." We usually ask people to make sure they move close together in the bus so they don't fall off.

   We say that no one can be in a bus by herself or himself, so if they have any trouble they should pick the most appropriate bus. For example, if we form buses by provinces and there's only one person from Manitoba, that person might want to join those from the closest province to form a larger (perhaps regional) bus.
5. We name the buses according to important features of the particular group (asking participants to form buses by where they were born, where they live, sector, organization, decade they were born, gender, number of children), making the buses appropriate to the group and the theme of the workshop.
6. We ask people in one or more buses to tell each other their names, organizations. We may also ask groups to tackle a specific task or question, such as "What are your hopes for this workshop?"
7. To avoid the process dragging, we try not to have too many buses and to minimize the time that people have to stay talking on their feet in each bus.
8. We summarize what we've learned about the group from this activity and note any specific questions the activity has raised.

Variations
- Arnold, Barndt, Burke, *A New Weave*, "Lifeboats", pp.17-19.

Source
- The Doris Marshall Institute (DMI).

Paired interviews

Why use it?
- to get to know each other
- to identify resources available within the group
- to give each person an opportunity to make a presentation in front of the group

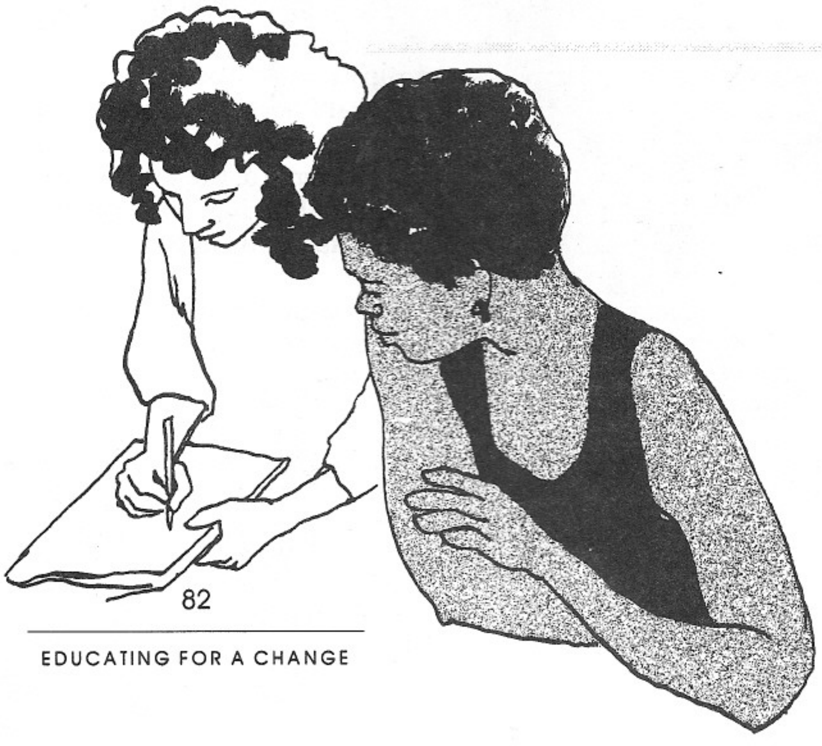
Time it takes
- 1-2 hours

What you need
- interview sheet handouts
- pencils

How it's done
1. Ask the group to brainstorm a list of things they would like to know about each other. Post these questions on the flip-chart for everybody's reference.
2. Ask each person to pair up with someone else they don't already know (or don't know well). Using the questions as a guide, the two partners interview each other. Each partner records information about the other one on the interview sheet. (This task takes ten to fifteen minutes).
3. Participants introduce their partners to the group, using their interview sheets and keeping the introductions as brief as possible. This process can take some time, so in larger sessions it might be broken up over the course of the first day.
4. The facilitator collects the interview sheets. If resources exist, a master is prepared and duplicated for everyone before the end of the workshop.

Variation
- The facilitator prepares an interview sheet ahead of time with questions related to the background of the workshop and with contact information.

Source
- There are many different kinds of paired interviews. This version is thanks to Jeff Piker, Kingston, Ontario.



Starter puzzle

Why use it?
- to get people to introduce themselves
- to share expectations for the event

Time it takes
- 10-30 minutes

What you need
- photocopies of pictures related to the theme of the workshop, cut into 3-4 pieces so they form a kind of puzzle
- a hat or basket for passing the pictures around

How it's done
1. Before the workshop we write questions for discussion on the back of the pictures. For example:
   - Tell the group who you are and where you work.
   - Tell us what you think the picture is portraying.
   - Tell us what you want to share, or what you want to learn in this session.
2. To begin, we ask each participant to choose one piece of the puzzle from a hat or basket.
3. We ask participants to search out the others who have the rest of their puzzle; they all put their pieces together and discuss the questions on the back.
4. We ask these small groups to write up the answers to the last question and post them on the wall – or share them with the other groups, depending on the time available and the number of participants.

Source
- The Centre for Adult and Continuing Education (CACE), University of Western Cape, South Africa.

DEBORAH BARNDT

Three paired skirmish and round robin

Why use it?
- to get to know each other
- to share expectations for the workshop

Time it takes
- 15 minutes for skirmish
- 30-45 minutes for round robin

What you need
- flip-chart and markers
- questions written on a piece of flip-chart paper
- masking tape

How it's done

1. We write three questions on the flip-chart, and then tape the bottom end of the chart onto the top so that participants can't see the questions and we can roll the paper down one question at a time. Some sample questions:
   - What did you have to do to get here today?
   - What comes to your mind when you hear the term "popular education"?
   - What do you want to get out of this workshop?*
2. We ask people to find a partner – the person they know least well. When everyone has a partner we lower the paper so the first question becomes visible, and we explain the task: "Talk to your partner for five minutes about the question. When you hear me clap, change partners – find someone else you don't know very well – and I'll give you another question. You won't have to report back this question to the full group."
3. After three to five minutes, we clap (or sometimes shout) and again have people change partners. We do this once more. Before beginning the discussion of the third question we tell people that they'll have to report this answer back to the full group.
4. In the full group we do a round robin, so that everyone has a chance to say what they want to get out of the workshop. We usually write this information down on the flip-chart beside the person's name. We save the flip-chart papers to use in the evaluation at the end.

Variation
- You can adapt the activity using other questions – or for other objectives.

Source
- DMI.

* These questions assume that participants have already introduced each other using an exercise such as Buses. If this is the first exercise you would need to add introductions.

DRAWING OUT KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE AND LOOKING FOR PATTERNS

Helps/hinders

Why use it?
- to identify key forces/elements that our organizations are up against and the main allies in our struggles

Time it takes
- 60-90 minutes

What you need
- cards or small pieces of paper, markers
- large headings – "Helps", "Hinders", "Both", "Not Sure" – placed on the wall

How it's done

1. We explain the task: "In groups of two, discuss the key forces or elements ranged against you in your struggle at the moment and your major supports/allies. Choose four of the most important (two "for" and two "against") and note them on the cards in headline form. You have twenty minutes."
2. We give each pair four cards and some coloured markers.
3. After twenty minutes, we explain how to post the cards in the four columns on the wall: "Helps, Hinders, Both, Not Sure." We ask the first group to post their cards and to explain how each force or element is helping or hindering their struggles. If it is both helping and hindering, place it under "both". Subsequent groups should place their cards in relation to what is already there.
4. When all the cards are posted, we reflect on the "Hinders" column. We usually ask, "What's missing?" and "What are the common threads?" We might also ask the group to summarize the dominant agenda (what we're up against).
5. We look at the other columns to pinpoint key elements for a discussion of strategy:

- in "Helps", who are our allies? What are some stories of resistance or of how we've already worked together?
- how can we turn the "Both" and "Not Sure" forces into "Helps"?
- how can we find the "cracks" in the dominant agenda to turn them into "Helps"?

Variations
- For other ways to analyse the balance of forces, See Barndt, *Naming the Moment.*
- "Helps/Hinders" can be adapted to many themes. For instance, when we used the activity in workshops with educators we change the question to "What helps/hinders our learning?"

Source
- DMI.

Nightmares

Why use it?
- to identify and analyse anticipated tensions in working as a social change educator
- to see how workshop design and/or facilitation can address those tensions

Time it takes
- 90 minutes (with about 20 people)

What you need
- workspaces for small groups of 4-5 people

How it's done

1. We explain the purpose of the exercise, hand out a tasksheet, and review the instructions.

   Tasksheet: Nightmares of running a workshop/meeting
   - Share your worst experiences or worst fears in running a workshop or other event.
   - Develop a **five-minute** scenario or situation to illustrate the major points made in the discussion. Build on one person's story that resonated with others in the group, or develop a composite story.
   - Prepare to dramatize this scenario to the other groups. You can use props, make signs, whatever you think will help your presentation.
2. We divide participants into groups of four or five persons and assign a workspace.
3. After thirty minutes we check to see whether everyone is ready. We allocate a few more minutes if necessary.
4. In turn the groups present their dramas. We usually give a warning at four minutes, and explain in advance that we will be cutting the action after five minutes. Otherwise it drags.
5. After each presentation there is discussion, using a couple of questions, and with notes made on the flip-chart:
   - Name the nightmares you saw in the drama.
   - Review what (if anything) the group tried to do to address the problems.
6. We give the participants five minutes back in their small groups to discuss how the presenting group might have dealt with the problems dramatized. They come back to the large group and share these ideas; again we note them on the flip-chart. After that we move on to the next drama.
7. After the last drama the facilitator leads a short summary reflection by the group, noting:
   - common threads
   - insights on the role of design and facilitation in solving the problems.

Variations
- Some of the presentations can be restaged, applying the suggestions made for solving the problems. (See also the activity "Stop drama".)

Source
- DMI.

The power flower: reflection on our social identities

Why use it?
- to identify who we are (and who we aren't) as individuals and as a group in relation to those who wield power in our society.
- to establish discrimination as a process for maintaining dominant identities.

Time it takes
- 45-60 minutes

What you need
- the power flower drawn on large paper
- individual copies of the flower as handouts
- a variety of coloured markers

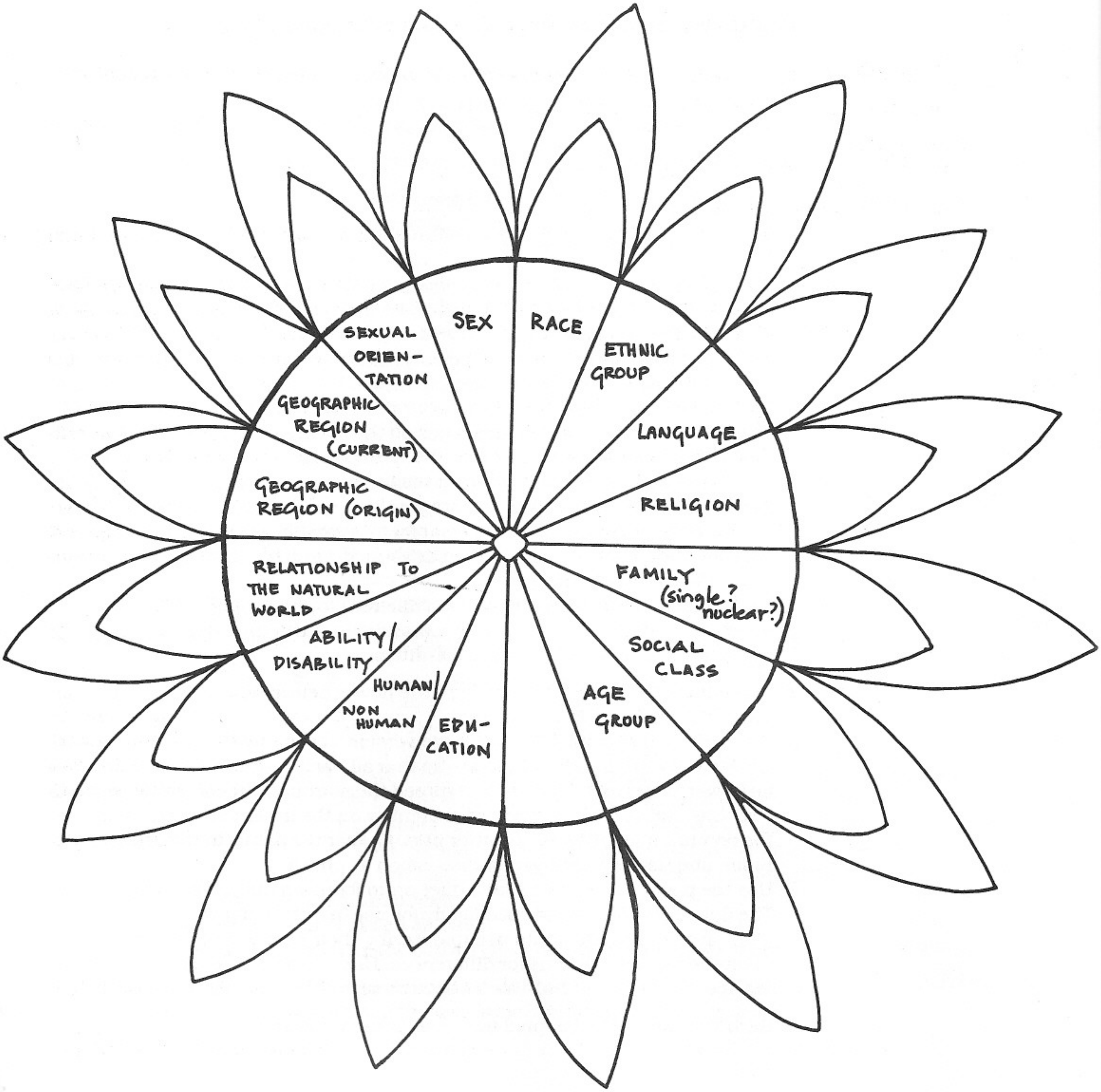
How it's done
1. We introduce the power flower, which we have drawn on large paper and placed on the wall. Together we all fill in the dominant social identity of the group on the outside circle.
2. Asking people to work with the person next to them, we hand out individual flowers to each pair. We ask participants to locate themselves on the inner blank circle.
3. The groups of two post their identities on the inner circle of the large flower as soon as they are ready to do so.
4. We review the composite as a group and reflect on:

- personal location: how many factors you have as an individual that are different from the dominant identity; what factors can't be shifted, changed?
- representation: who we are/are not as a group – and how that might influence the task/discussion at hand.
- the relationship between and among different forms of oppression.
- the process at work to establish dominance of a particular identity and, at the same time, to subordinate other identities.

Variations
- Individuals fill in the inner circle of the flower before reflecting on the dominant social identity in the group.
- Using flip-chart paper, cut out large versions of the twelve different petals. Each petal should be large enough so that all participants can make an entry on it. Name each of the petals and spread them around the room. Participants circulate and record their personal identity on the inner part of the petal and the dominant identity on the outer part. Gather the petals in the centre of the room, and use as a catalyst for discussion as above.
- Use the power flower as an introduction to focus on one form of oppression. The flower was developed specifically for use in anti-racist work.
- List the words participants use to describe their own "ethnicity" and "race". Examine the two columns for differences. Use this as a take-off point for talking about race as a social – as opposed to scientific – concept.

Source
- Barb Thomas, DMI. Adapted from *Lee, Letters to Marcia.*

The power flower



Drawing "When I see, hear, feel these things ..."

Why use it?
- to identify connections between racism in the society and in the workplace

Time it takes
- 60-90 minutes (with about 20 people)

What you need
- work areas for four groups
- large paper, coloured markers for each group

How it's done
1. We divide participants into four groups.
2. We give tasksheet A to groups #1 and #2 and tasksheet B to groups #3 and #4.
3. We explain the task, which is to either prepare a drawing of how racism happens in society or how it happens in the workplace. If people are intimidated by drawing, we suggest they draw with their non-dominant hand or that they sketch their own ideas on scrap paper and then work with others to develop a collective drawing.
4. We give large sheets of flip-chart paper and coloured markers to each group.
5. After thirty minutes we ask the groups to post their drawings. Beginning with the "society" drawings, we ask the other groups to identify what they see in the drawings and get the artists themselves to explain the main messages. All the points are noted on the flip-chart under "Society" and "Workplace" headings.
6. We ask participants to comment on any patterns they see in the drawings and data generated: for example, power, exclusion, or similarities between racism in society and in the workplace
7. We help participants frame this discussion using the triangle tool.

Variations
- The activity can also be used to generate data on sexism and other forms of oppression.
- The activity can be done as a collage instead of a drawing.
- It may be important to talk about the process of doing the drawing before the discussion, especially if there has been discomfort in the room. A way to start might be to ask: "What was going on in your group as you tried to do the task together? Was it comfortable or uncomfortable?" This allows participants to put some words to difficult feelings.
- Rather than doing a drawing, participants can be divided into six groups, each with a different point to consider:

❑ when I **see** in society ...	❑ when I **see** in the workplace ...
❑ when I **hear** in society ...	❑ when I **hear** in the workplace ...
❑ when I **feel** in society ...	❑ when I **feel** in the workplace ...

- Each of the six groups records its comments on flip-chart paper for the larger group to see. The facilitator proceeds with the discussion as above.

Source
- Adapted by the DMI from Anne Marie Stewart, Toronto Board of Education.

Tasksheet A: racism in society

Prepare a group drawing to illustrate how racism happens **in our society,** outside our organizations. One way to help prepare the drawing is to discuss the following:

"When I see, hear, feel these things in the external environment, I know racism is happening."

You have thirty minutes to prepare.

Tasksheet B: racism in the workplace

Prepare a group drawing to illustrate how racism happens **inside our organizations.** One thing that may help you prepare the drawings is to discuss the following:

"When I see, hear, feel these things in my organization, I know racism is happening."

You have thirty minutes to prepare.

ADDING THEORY OR NEW INFORMATION

Triangle tool

Why use it?
- to provide a framework for analysing connections and differences between systemic/structural, ideological, and personal aspects of racism

Time it takes
- 30 minutes

What you need
- flip-chart, markers, and tape
- assumes prior discussion, such as the one described in the activity, Drawing "When I see, hear, feel these things..."

How it's done
1. We mark the three points of the triangle on the flip-chart: IDEAS, STRUCTURES/SYSTEMS, PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.
2. We draw a circle around each of the concepts, explaining each one as we go.
3. We ask participants to give us their comments from the "See, hear, feel" activity on racism in society, and we note these comments at the appropriate triangle point. There should be two or three comments for each point on the triangle.
4. We draw lines between the three triangle points and consider the relationship between them. We note that power operates at each point to maintain or challenge racism.
5. We ask participants to give their comments from the racism in their organizations drawings. We post these inside the triangle. We note down several comments until it is clear that the inside of our organizations reflects what is happening outside in society. We draw arrows to illustrate the connections.
6. In a brief synthesis we underline:

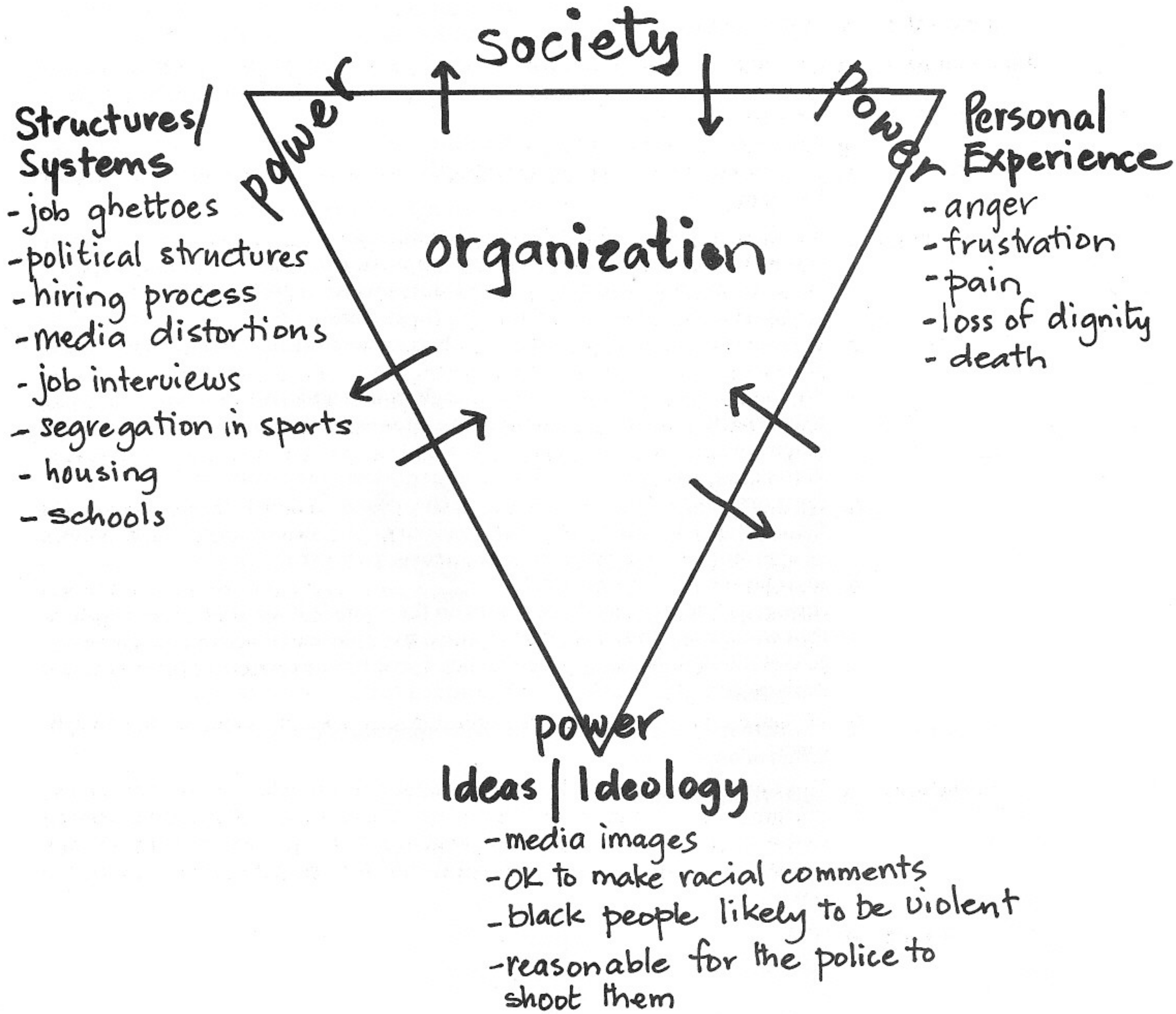
- the need to address all three points on the triangle if we are to attack racism.
- that what exists in society also exists in workplaces and other organizations.
- Sometimes we also ask participants to consider the points in another group's drawing that they think should be added to their own analysis.

Variations
- The activity can also be used to do an analysis of gender, race, ability – other forms of oppression.

Source
- Barb Thomas, DMI.

The triangle tool

Here is an example of participants' comments that we've placed on the triangle.



Facilitator presentations

Why use it?
- to introduce the principles of education for social change and their basis in how people learn

Time it takes
- 15-20 minutes

What you need
- flip-charts prepared in advance on principles of effective adult education; principles of education for social change; and stages of a workshop (the spiral model)*
- flip-chart, markers, and tape
- prior exploration of participant experience in what makes education effective for them

How it's done
1. We make the charts ahead of time, including all of the main points we want to make. We also make visible the main points that emerged from the discussion of participant experience with effective education. (We often do this by having people share what helps and hinders them learn.)
2. We post the charts on principles of effective adult education and principles of education for social change. In reviewing the principles, we try to link them to the points already raised by the participants. The fact that many of these points have already been mentioned emphasizes that much of this information is knowledge they already had. What the presentation tries to do is suggest a framework.
3. We look at how this relates to the theory of how people learn by drawing the "learning heads" on the flip-chart. (See chapter two, "TAKING OURSELVES SERIOUSLY, Why we find the spiral model useful.")
4. We relate all of this to how we structure a learning event by presenting the spiral stages of a workshop – which both takes into account and uses the principles of education for social change and what we know about how people learn.
5. People are invited throughout to stop us and ask questions if there is something that is not clear.
6. We leave time following the presentation for questions, comments, and synthesis.

Variations
- There are many other kinds of presentations: an outside resource person, use of a film or video, a panel ... the list is long. These presentations can be framed so that participants are active co-presenters in the process; the participants can seek what they want to learn rather than just what the presenter wants to say.

Source
- DMI.

* All of these charts appear earlier in this chapter.

Sculpturing an analysis

This activity gets people to position themselves in ways expressing power relationships among major actors – in this example, among the major actors in the conflict in South Africa. The result is a human sculpture that represents the group's understanding and knowledge of what is going on in South Africa. In this case, South African resource people and facilitators with recent experience in the region added their information to that of participants.

Why use it?

- to identify the major players in the conflict in South Africa and share information about their strategies
- to critically examine Canada's role and our role as solidarity organizations in relation to the major South African actors

Time it takes

- 45-60 minutes

What you need

- at least 10 participants
- two facilitators or a participant willing to assist one facilitator
- a large space
- small pieces of paper, masking tape, magic markers
- flip-chart

How it's done

1. We ask participants to name the major actors in the conflict in South Africa. (They can name individuals, forces, or organizations). One facilitator writes the actors named on the flip-chart, checking to be sure that everyone knows who the actor is but without getting into any lengthy discussion.
2. At the same time, using the marker, the other facilitator writes the names of the actors on small slips of paper. We try to group the actors as we go – into opposition groups, apartheid supporters, international actors, and so on.
3. The first facilitator reviews the purpose of the exercise and explains that we will be choosing people to represent the actors and positioning them as a sculpture, placing them according to their relative power over resources and decision-making. The whole group decides where each actor goes. Participants can use different gestures or props.
4. The second facilitator asks two participants to take the roles of two of the actors representing the apartheid structures, sticking the slips of paper naming the actors on their bodies with masking tape. The group discusses how these actors should be positioned in terms of their power relationship.
5. We proceed to identify and place the other actors, leaving the international actors – and especially Canada and the solidarity network – until last. (It is important that we are in the picture.) We continue to check with the group to see that everyone's points are being included in the analysis being developed and that everyone understands the relationships.

   Some of the most useful discussions occur when people differ. In one workshop in 1987 with anti-apartheid youth, both Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) and African National Congress (ANC) supporters were among the participants. After much discussion and debate, we were able to agree on the historical and current positioning of each actor, naming differences in analysis as we went along.

6. We ask clarifying questions and add information where necessary.
7. Before we break up the sculpture and everyone sits down, we ask the actors to review who they are and how they relate to each other. (We find it's also helpful to ask how it feels to be in the role.)
8. We have a discussion, which often focuses on the role of the Canadian government and the implications for solidarity work.

Variations

- Another sculpture could be made to represent how we would like to change the situation – how we would like the relationships to be – or to represent possible responses to the situation we've described.
- This approach to sculpturing can be used to develop an analysis of one sector only (for instance, the trade union sector in South Africa, the food sector in Canada).
- The "theatre of the oppressed" can also be used to look at contradictions in relations of power. For an example, see Barndt, *Naming the Moment*, pp.43-44.

Source

- Rick Arnold and Bev Burke, DMI.

PRACTISING SKILLS, FORMING STRATEGIES, AND PLANNING FOR ACTION

Using video

Why use it?

- to document the practice of facilitation in training sessions with social change educators
- to affirm and critique participants' own skills in facilitation
- to enlist feedback from colleagues

Time it takes

- 1 day for recording & feedback (assumes prior preparation)

What you need

- video recorder and playback (1 set for every 8 participants)
- videotape for each participant
- one quiet work area for every 8 participants
- flip-chart, pens, tape in each area
- 1 facilitator for every 8 participants

How it's done

1. On the day before the session, in teams of two the participants prepare a design for a three-hour workshop for a particular constituency on a particular theme. On the day of the session the facilitators divide the collected pairs into two groups, with each facilitator responsible for four teams.
2. The facilitator explains the task. Each team is to present the outline of their workshop plan; and facilitate a ten-minute segment as if the facilitators were the participants.
3. The process for the videotaping is posted on a flip-chart:

- team sets up
- team explains the plan (general objectives, participants, agenda) and describes how the activity to be facilitated fits into the plan
- the "audience" takes on the role of the participants
- facilitation of the plan (ten minutes)
- note-taking (five minutes)

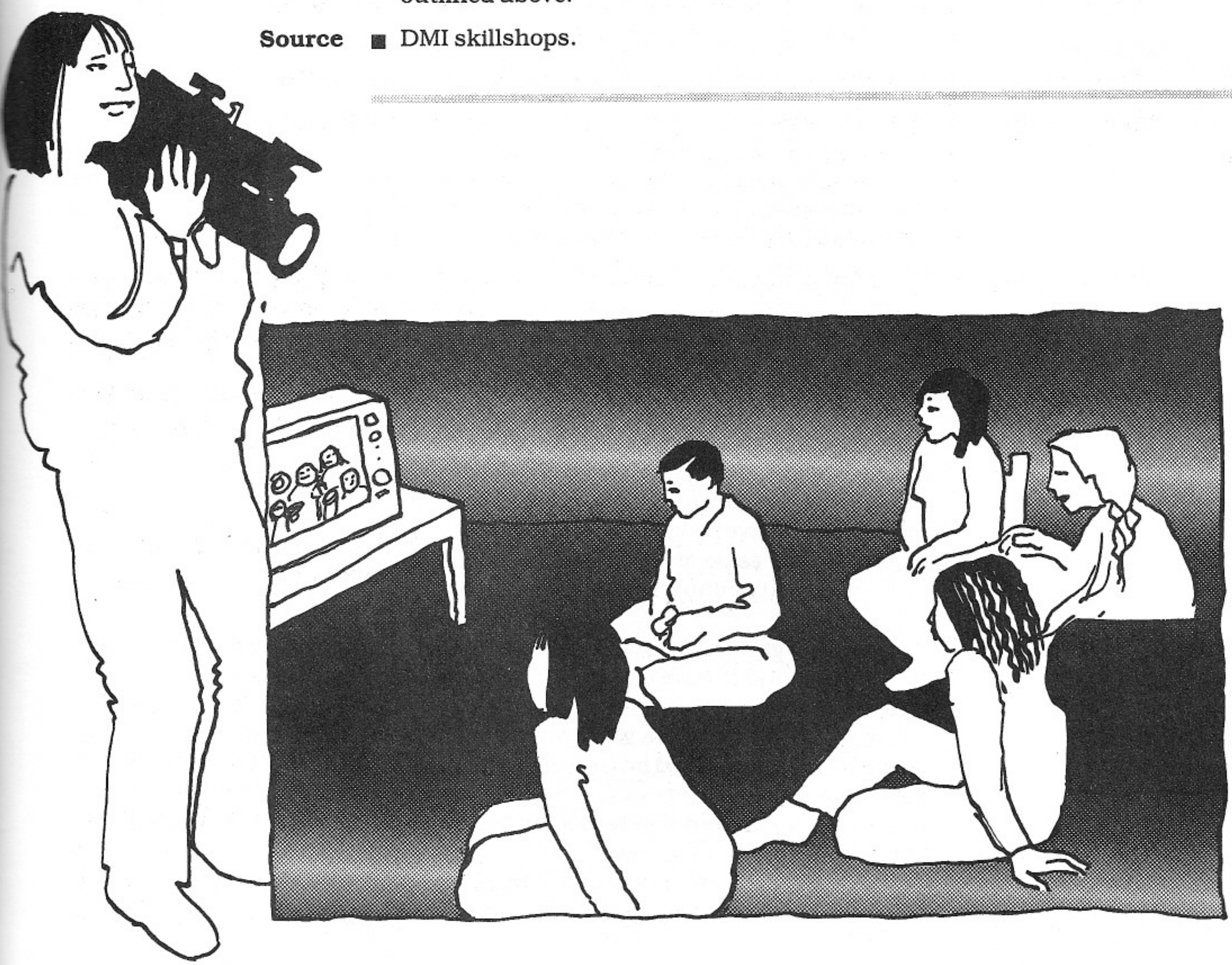
Note: all the teams should present their segment and be taped, one after the other, in the morning before the feedback begins.

4. In the afternoon the full group generates guidelines for feedback. (This process is described in detail in chapter four, "GIVING AND GETTING FEEDBACK".) The facilitator asks, "What helps you hear critical feedback?" and notes participant input on the flip-chart. These notes become "guidelines for feedback", which are used to give critical feedback to colleagues on their presentations. The facilitator is responsible for making sure that the guidelines are followed.

5. We replay the videotapes and tape the feedback. For feedback we use this process:
   - The team comments on what they thought they did well; what could have been improved; what they want comments / suggestions on.
   - Each person in turn gives feedback according to the guidelines established. The team cannot answer back.
   - After hearing all of the feedback, the presenters make summary comments (if time permits).
6. Each participant gets a tape of her or his presentation and feedback.

Variation
- When no video equipment is available, we adapt the process: there is feedback immediately following each team presentation, using the same process as outlined above.

Source
- DMI skillshops.



Case studies

For this example, we have chosen film clips used as case studies in a skillshop with educators from immigrant service organizations.

Why use it?
- to practise using the triangle tool (see "ADDING THEORY OR NEW INFORMATION" in this chapter) for an analysis of equity issues (racism and sexism) in the workplace
- to explore ways to use the case studies in dealing with issues and tensions common in educationals about equity

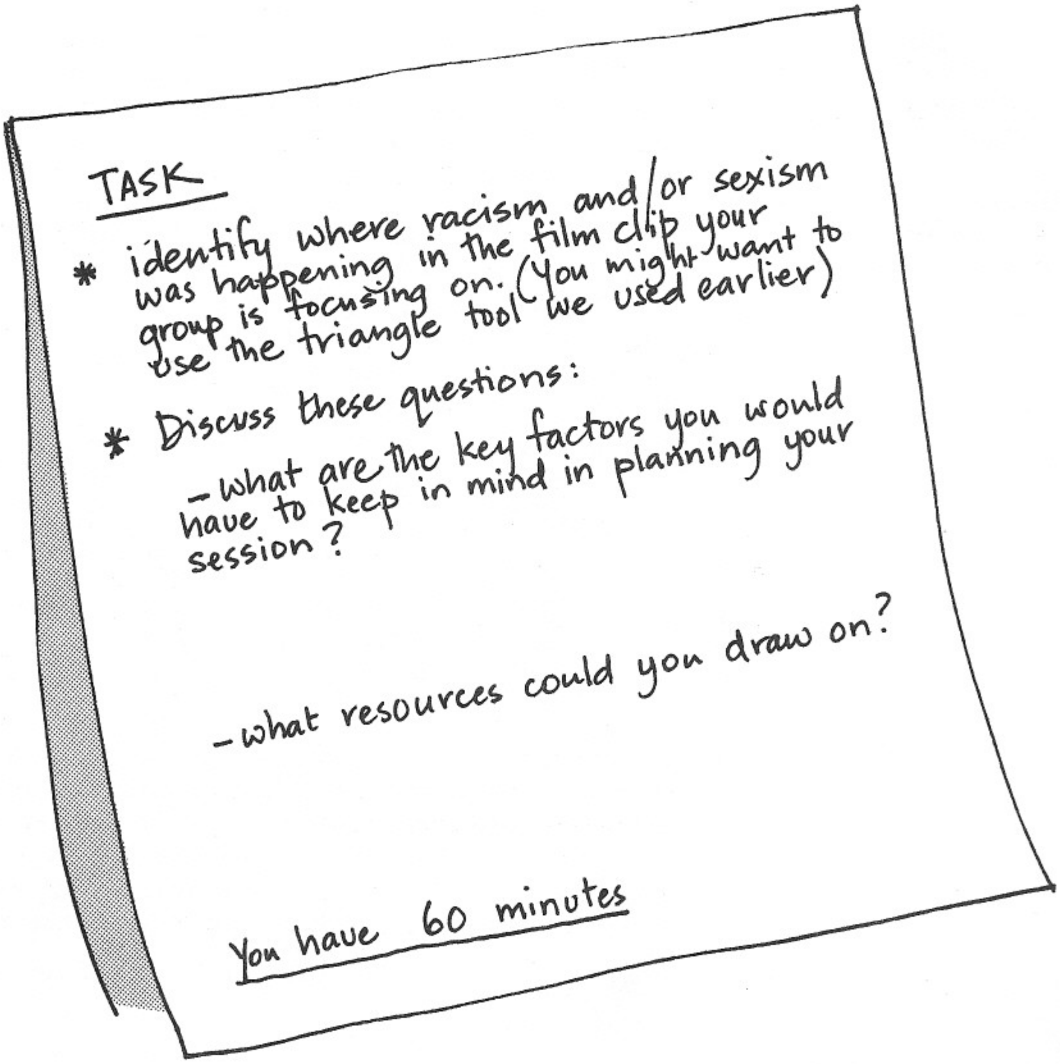
Time it takes
- 90 minutes

What you need
- 5-minute video clips – as case studies on workplace discrimination
- group scenarios written on flip-chart
- workspace for small groups

How it's done
1. We show two of the video clips: a case of sexual harassment of a woman worker in a hospital and a case of racism directed against a worker in a loading yard.
2. We post a number of different scenarios developed for using the case studies in educationals. These relate to the specific work contexts of the participants and to the case studies. Here are two scenarios that we've used:
   - for video #1 – sexual harassment "You have been asked to come and talk to female workers in the hospital about sexual harassment."
   - for video #2 – loading yard "You have been asked to prepare a session for the union at the loading yard to sensitize the workers to cross-cultural issues."
3. We hand out a tasksheet and review it with participants:
4. We ask participants to choose the scenario they wish to work on by voting with their feet – moving to the place in the room where that scenario is posted.
5. When all participants have made their choice we divide into groups so a maximum of four to five people are working together. A scenario has to be chosen by at least three people or it does not get used.
6. Groups get sixty minutes to complete the task, during which time the facilitator circulates.
7. We ask each group to post the triangle tool (if used) and answers to the questions posed; and to have one person prepared to answer questions from other participants.
8. Participants circulate in a gallery review of the work produced. We encourage groups that have worked on the same scenario to compare responses and new ideas or insights.
9. In plenary, we record a summary of "insights" and "blocks or problems" in doing the exercise.

Variations ■ Case studies can come in many formats: print, audio-visual, photostories. They can be used for many purposes as well. For example, we used a written case study of the Guatemala Coca Cola workers in workshops with Canadian food industry workers as a way of learning about other ways of building alliances.

Source ■ DMI. The video clips in this activity were from Workplace Discrimination, City of Toronto, 1987.



Stop drama, or "take two"

Why use it?
- to develop concrete strategies for dealing with conflict situations in our work as social change educators

Time it takes
- 90 minutes (with about 20 people)

What you need
- a large area, free of furniture
- space for 4 groups to work
- flip-chart, markers, tape

How it's done
1. We follow the procedure outlined in the "Nightmares" activity: participants divide into small groups and develop dramatizations of their worst experiences, of their fears about running a workshop, or of working with a group immersed in conflict.
2. Each group presents its scenario and the group as a whole identifies the nature of the conflict(s) they see dramatized. In one drama, for instance, there might be competing political perspectives, a facilitator trying to avoid conflict, and a generation-gap issue.
3. After all of the groups present their drama, we introduce the process that we're going to use for looking at strategies to address the issues raised. We explain that the time available allows us to only work with one or two of the dramas. So we ask participants to choose which one(s) they want to work on.
4. The original group presents the drama over again. Participants reconvene in their groups for ten minutes to develop concrete strategies for addressing the situation. We ask each group to name a facilitator who will try out the group strategy for dealing with the situation.
5. Each group has an opportunity to take the place of the facilitator in the scene and replay it in a different way, using the original group as the participants.
6. After all of the groups have had an opportunity to practise their strategies, the facilitator leads a discussion of the approaches that have emerged, noting the main points on the flip-chart.

Variations
- Any member of the audience who wants to intervene and become a character in the drama can do so by clapping her or his hands to stop the action. The new actor takes the place of someone in the drama and the action resumes.
- If someone feels that any response or action in the drama is unrealistic, she or he calls out "magic". This stops the drama, and the person intervening must enter the scene and replay it in a more realistic manner.

Source
- Adapted by members of the DMI from Theatre of the Oppressed approaches.

REFLECTION AND EVALUATION

Quick and dirty: reconstructing an activity

Why use it?
- to reflect critically on an activity during an event, when the activity has not gone well.

Time it takes
- 15-30 minutes

What you need
- cards or small pieces of paper and markers

How it's done
1. In advance we break down the activity into its component parts, and we make a card for each point. We copy the cards so there are two identical sets.
2. We divide participants into two teams and give each team one set of cards. We ask them to put the activity cards into the right order – that is, the order in which the activity occurred.
3. When both groups have finished this task, they compare the reconstructions and work to reach an agreement on the order of the parts of the activity.
4. In smaller groups, participants are asked to identify what worked or didn't work in the original activity and why. We ask them if they have any suggestions for improvement.
5. Participants return to the plenary and report back on their discussions and suggestions.

Source
- DMI.

Quick and dirty: line-up

This example is taken from a specific workshop looking at coalition-building on a national level in Canada. There was a wide range of participants from across the country.

Why use it?

- to clarify objectives when there is disagreement among participants

Time it takes

- 15 minutes + follow-up

How it's done

1. We asked two participants to represent the extreme poles. A participant who saw the purpose of the session as a time for people to listen to each other went to one side of the room. A participant who saw the objective as organizing an action campaign went to the other side.
2. When these two participants were in place, we asked others in the group to physically position themselves along the line between the two according to how they saw the objectives for the session.
3. We asked people to briefly explain the reasons for their position.
4. Based on this information, we asked the participants to look at the agenda and see how their differing priorities could be covered. We agreed on making changes to the agenda.

Variations

- Have people line up by the length of time they have been with the organization. It gives a sense of both new blood and experience in the room.
- The activity can be used as a conflict resolution technique to come up with a compromise solution.
- It can also be used for the quick and dirty end-of-session evaluations: one end of the line for "absolutely wonderful"; the other end for "yuck".

Source

- Adapted and readapted by many different groups. Special thanks to Denise Nadeau, a popular educator in Vancouver.

Fly on the ceiling

We gave the exercise this name to indicate the need for participants to step out of the process and look at it from a distance.

Why use it?
- to determine to what extent the process and content of an event are meeting the needs of participants

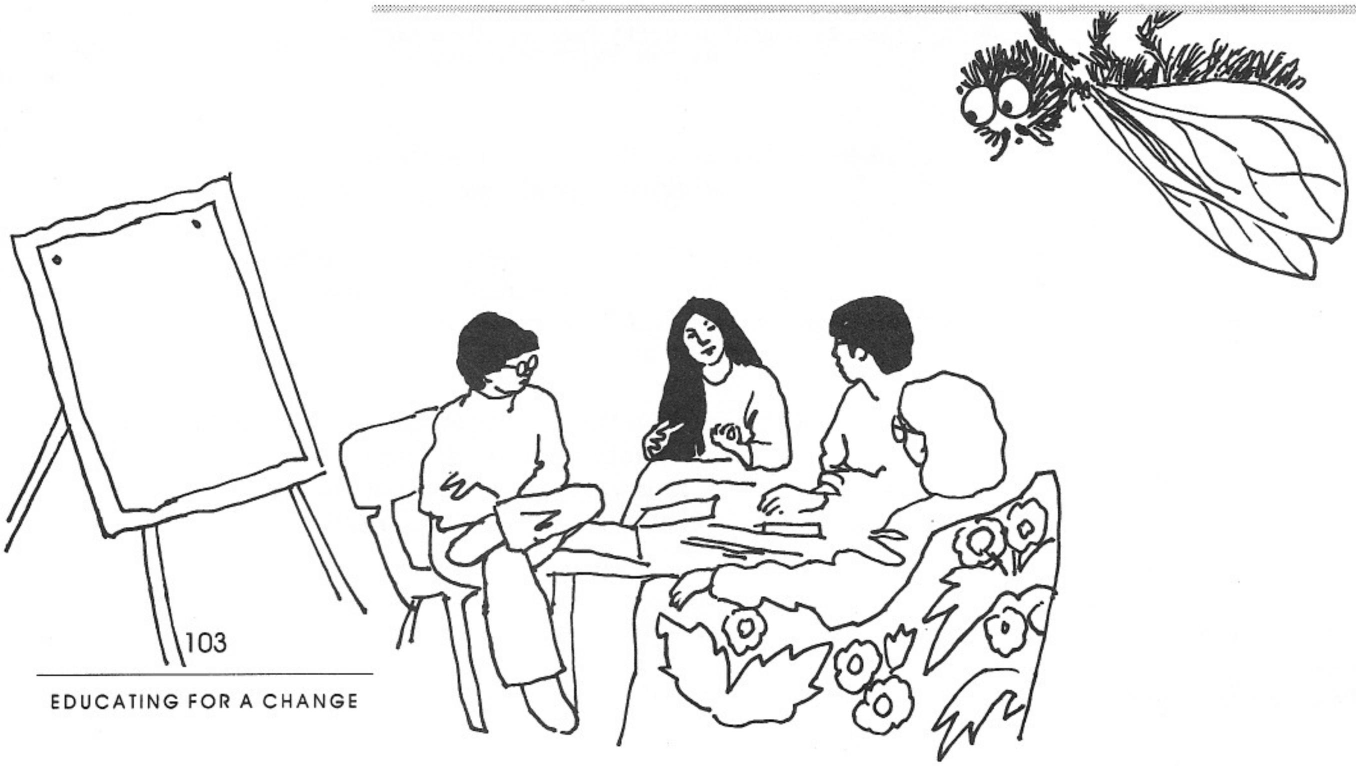
Time it takes
- 10-30 minutes at the end of a day/session

What you need
- a copy of the "fly on the ceiling" handout for each person for each day of the event

How it's done
1. We give each participant a copy of the handout and explain the purpose of the exercise. We note that the sheet is for their own reference and will not be collected.
2. As a group, we reconstruct the day by reviewing what happened.
3. We give participants five minutes to fill in the sheet.
4. We either ask for volunteers or ask all participants to comment on what happened for them during the day; what worked or didn't work. We stress that this information will help us redesign the program for the next day.

Variations
- Focus on a particular problem that emerged during the day.
- Participants can be asked to say what they want the program to stop, start, keep doing the next day.

Source
- DMI.



Fly on the ceiling

1. What did we do (reconstruction)? Why?

2. What happened for you – summarize what you learned or felt.

3. What could you use? How could you change it to meet your own situation? What alternatives can you think of?

Process observers

Why use it?
- to give participants an opportunity to practice observing and critiquing process
- to equalize power relations between facilitator and participants

Time it takes
- 10 minutes for the report

What you need
- Copies of the "process observer sheet"

How it's done
1. In the first session of a longer event, during the introduction to the program, we introduce the "process observer" concept and its objective and review the sheet with the group.
2. We ask for two volunteers for the first day of the program. We explain that these two process observers are responsible for collecting input from other participants, and that they will make a short report at the beginning of the session following the one they observed.
3. The process observer report is the first thing we usually ask for in the morning, before reviewing the agenda for the day. Then we ask for new volunteers to act as process observers for the coming session.

Variations
- Depending on the sector, we may change the title. In the union movement the role of class steward can be adapted to take on this role.

Source
- DMI.

Process observer sheet

Your role:

1. To be available to participants for input into the course as we go along.
2. To reflect on how the day went, keeping in mind:
- participation
- pacing (Did things move too fast? too slow?)
- balance of new and familiar content
- language (Could everyone understand? Is the terminology clear?)
- logistics.

At the end of the day, prepare your report with the other observer based on feedback from other participants and your own observations during the day. The report should be no more than ten minutes in length and will be given at the beginning of the morning session. You might want to make your observations on this sheet.

Head, heart, feet

Why use it?
- to evaluate a session at its conclusion

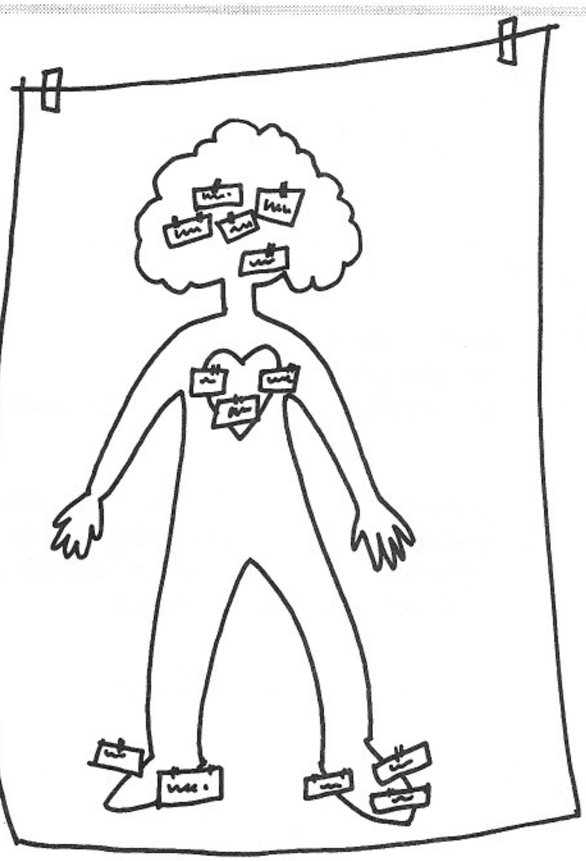
Time it takes
- 30 minutes

What you need
- evaluation sheet for each participant
- flip-chart, markers, tape

How it's done
1. We hand out the evaluation sheet, explaining its objective and how the information will be used.
2. We invite participants to draw their head, heart, feet on the paper, using the markers.
3. We ask participants to fill in the form (individually or with someone else).
4. If there is time, we ask them to share something they learned or to give final comments.

Variations
- Draw a large head, heart, feet on flip-chart paper and post it. Distribute small slips of paper and ask participants to write down the major things they learned or got out of the event. Post these points in the appropriate position on the flip-chart and discuss them.

Source
- Adapted from Marsha Sfeir, a Toronto educator. The variation was developed by participants at a workshop in Peterborough, Ontario.



Educating for a change: course evaluation

Date:

This form has two purposes. We hope it will help you reflect on your own learning during the course. We know it will help us improve our work. To make the evaluation as useful as possible to us, it helps if you can be specific and personal (for instance, use "I" instead of "we").

Part one: What did you learn from this course?

a) New knowledge gained from the course; new questions you would like answers to
b) New understandings, feelings, you leave with
c) New skills – things you can use in your work

Part two: Your assessment of the course

1. What parts of the course did you find most useful? Why?
2. What parts did you find least useful? Why?
3. What ideas could you suggest for improvement?

Many thanks for taking the time to fill this out.

ENERGIZING PARTICIPANTS AND FACILITATORS

The people say

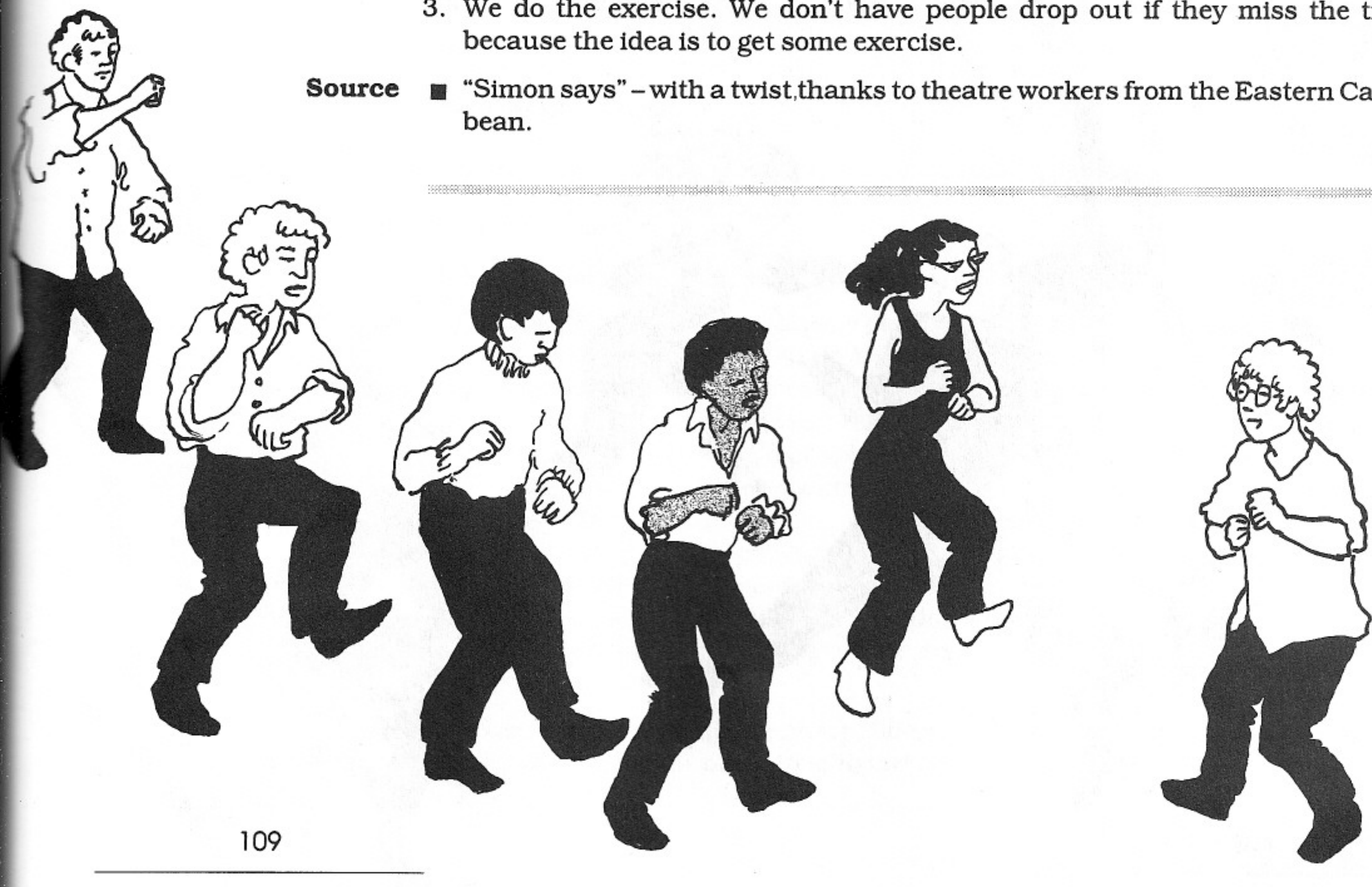
Why use it?
- to deal with sluggishness during a workshop/meeting/event

Time it takes
- 2-5 minutes

What you need
- no additional requirements

How it's done
1. We explain to people that we have noticed glazed eyes or feel tired ourselves – whatever has prompted us to introduce the exercise. We also explain that there is a physiological reason for the exercise: to get oxygen to the brain.
2. We explain the game. "I will be asking you to take an action. Because we are concerned about democratic social change here, we want the people involved in our decisions. So, respond to my request only if I preface it with 'the people say'. For example, if I say 'the people say, stand up', you stand up. If I only say 'stand up', you pay no attention."
3. We do the exercise. We don't have people drop out if they miss the trick because the idea is to get some exercise.

Source
- "Simon says" – with a twist,thanks to theatre workers from the Eastern Caribbean.



Post Office

Why use it?
- to deal with sluggishness during a session – and to have fun

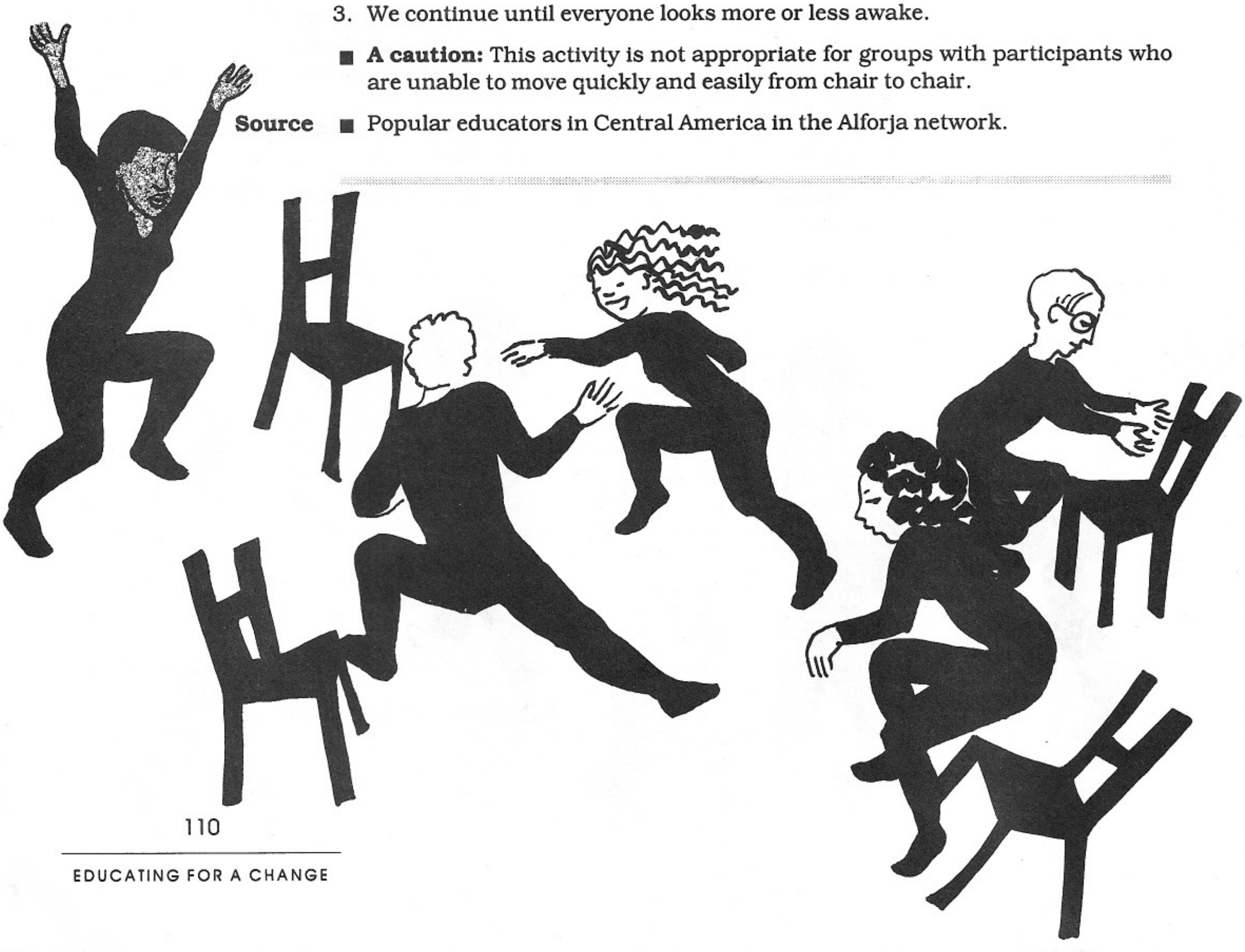
Time it takes
- 5-10 minutes

What you need
- chairs in a circle, one for each participant with the facilitator's chair removed
- a piece of paper

How it's done
1. We explain the purpose of the exercise, its name, and where it comes from.
2. We outline the rules. We explain that the facilitator is a letter carrier with a letter (the piece of paper). We say, "I have a letter here for everyone with hair on their heads – and the amount of hair doesn't matter." Everyone answering this description changes chairs across the circle (and not just shifts sideways). We explain that the facilitator will also be looking for a chair. The person without the chair becomes the new letter carrier.
3. We continue until everyone looks more or less awake.

- **A caution:** This activity is not appropriate for groups with participants who are unable to move quickly and easily from chair to chair.

Source
- Popular educators in Central America in the Alforja network.



Sentence reconstruction

Why use it? ■ as a warm-up before a session

Time it takes ■ 15 minutes

What you need ■ each word from 2 sentences written on different index cards

How it's done

1. We choose sentences that relate to the theme of the session.
2. We divide the participants into two teams, and give each team a set of cards.
3. We explain that the task is to reconstruct the sentence.
4. When both teams have finished, we ask them to show the sentence to the other team.

Variations

■ Both teams could work with the same sentence.

■ Use the exercise to spark a discussion of working collectively by reflecting on what helped get the task done or what blocked its progress.

Source ■ DMI.

Person to person

Why use it? ■ to deal with sluggishness during a session or as an icebreaker

Time it takes ■ 10 minutes

What you need ■ an odd number of people

How it's done

1. We ask participants to choose a partner and stand in a large circle.
2. Borrowing a partner, a facilitator explains the rules and demonstrates how it's done. When we call out two parts of the body (for instance, hand to head) one person puts her hand on the head of her partner. We continue to call out different combinations until people are tangled up. At that point we shout "person to person" and everyone changes partners. The person without a partner becomes the new caller.
3. We begin the exercise, calling, for instance, "knee to hip, toe to toe, shoulder to ankle" – until everyone is tangled. Then we call "person to person" and find a partner ourselves. A participant becomes the new caller.
4. We continue as long as we have time available, or until it threatens to become boring.

Source ■ Sticks and Stones theatre group, Sudbury, Ontario. ("Personne à personne" is described in their book *Neighbourhood Action: Recipes for Change* (out of print).

A FINAL WORD

We hope you will use and adapt these activities for your own work. And as you do, don't forget the checklist for developing appropriate activities.

Consider

- the local context
- the number of participants
- who the participants are: their cultural background, sector, social class, race, gender, traditions
- "comfort level" – would participants feel uncomfortable doing the activity at this stage in the event?
- objectives
- the design – when in the workshop should the activity take place? to get out participant experience, analyse a topic, add new information, make an action plan?
- the time of day
- the time you have
- language-level and literacy
- space, logistics
- materials and technology available or required
- theme or subject matter
- resources you have
- participant experience, how much they know about the theme
- organizational context (timing, who is involved)
- your nightmares, and potential resistance to the activity