



PATHFINDER LEADERSHIP AWARD



PTHOPS002

**Pathfinder Active Learning
Methods**

Resource Material

January 2009



Resource Material for the Pathfinder Leadership Award.

The Resource Material, Review Booklet and Assessment tools were produced by the Seventh-day Adventist Church Youth Ministries of the South Pacific Division (SPD). We pay tribute to Pastor John Wells, the main contributor in the reshaping, rewriting and adapting of this material. He was assisted by a number of other experienced leaders and an editorial team brought the task to completion. We wish to express our deepest thanks to them all.

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The Unit Outline is unchangeable. However, Conferences/Missions in the SPD are encouraged to be creative in the delivery of the training to suit their local needs. Photocopying of this material is permitted in the context of leadership training. It is not to be used for commercial purposes.

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Orientation

Welcome to the Resource Material for PTHOPS002 Pathfinder Active Learning Methods.

Purpose

This unit covers the background and advantages of the Active Learning Method. It describes the process of preparing, monitoring and using debriefing as a learning tool.

The Resource Material

This Resource Material contains the essential information to meet the competencies outlined for this unit. This resource material should help you to:

- Gain a comprehensive understanding of Pathfinder Active Learning Methods.
- Understand active learning issues as they relate to a Pathfinder Club.
- Prepare for the PLA training/review/assessment program.
- Acquire knowledge that will help with your Pathfinder Ministry.

A basic Review Booklet has been developed for this unit. It contains a small number of worksheets that, once completed, provide evidence that you understand the material. The Review Booklet needs to be completed before the assessment and forms part of the requirements to gain competence in this unit.

Note: If you have any questions, please consult your District Director or your local Conference/Mission Youth Department.

What Additional Resources Do I Need?

- The 'Way to Go' CD (if available).
- Pathfinder Staff Manual.

What Do I Need to Bring for the Training/Review/Assessment Program?

- Resource Material (if received beforehand).
- Review Booklet (completed, if required).
- Pencil/pen.
- Any other resources or equipment as specified by your Assessor.

How Will I Be Assessed?

At the Conference/Mission training/review/assessment program, your competency will be assessed by one or more of the following methods:

- Written/oral questioning.
- Completed Review Booklet.
- Simulation activities.
- Project/assignment.

Reassessment Process

- You will be given the opportunity for reassessment if you are not found competent.
- There will be no limit to the number of opportunities for re-assessment.

Appeal Process

If you are not satisfied with your assessment you can:

- Discuss the issue with your Assessor.
- Discuss the issue with your District Director.
- Request the mediation of another Assessor.
- Report your concern to the Conference/Mission Youth Director.

Unit Outline

The Unit Outline below summarises the requirements (Elements) of this unit. Each Element requires completion of various tasks (Performance Criteria).

PTHOPS002	Pathfinder Active Learning Methods
PLA	Pathfinder Leadership Award

DESCRIPTION: This unit has been developed by the Adventist Youth Ministries of the South Pacific Division (SPD). It covers the background and advantages of the Active Learning Theory. It describes the process of preparing, monitoring and using debriefing as a learning tool. The unit covers the specific training skills needed for introducing, conducting and debriefing an active learning event.

The Competency Based Training (CBT) method has been adopted for the delivery of this unit.

Element	Performance Criteria
1. Summarise the theory and history of active learning.	1.1. Outline what is meant by the term 'active learning'. 1.2. Illustrate how Jesus used active learning. 1.3. Identify the contribution that different people made to the development of active learning. 1.4. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of active learning.
2. Determine the process of active learning.	2.1. Identify what is involved in preparation. 2.2. Define the role of the introduction. 2.3. Outline the purpose of monitoring during the active learning experience.
3. Apply debriefing skills.	3.1. Demonstrate your knowledge of the stages of debriefing. 3.2. Identify things to avoid in debriefing.

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Pathfinding has continued to be the main ministry program for young people aged between 10 –15 in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and has provided positive memories for thousands of people right throughout the world. To keep the Pathfinder program relevant and interesting to young people who live in a world that is constantly changing, the South Pacific Division, in 2000, released the 'Way To Go' Pathfinder Program which is based on the following premises:

1. Pathfinders enjoy doing things when they are involved and when it is fun.
2. Pathfinders really learn by doing.
3. Pathfinders enjoy learning when they can see that it is important to them.
4. Pathfinders are very interested in God, provided He is presented to them in the right way.
5. The majority of Pathfinders want to give themselves to God and follow Him.

As Lawrence Richards, a Christian educator, says, *"To move up even to the re-statement level of learning, students must be led beyond listening. They must personally think through the meaning of Bible truths. They must toss the ideas around in their own minds to formulate and express them in their own words. For this kind of learning, the students have to participate, to express their own ideas and their own insights...But the creative teacher makes sure that his students take an active part in exploring meaning"* (Larry Richards, *Creative Bible Teaching*, Chicago, Moody Press, 1973).

The 'Way to Go' Pathfinder Program is based on the educational theory of active learning or experimental education theory. Many leaders have informally used these concepts for as long Youth and Pathfinder Ministries have existed. This unit has been designed to help Pathfinder leaders to be intentional in integrating this teaching method in their clubs.

*"Tell me and I will forget
Show me and I may remember
Involve me and I will understand."*¹

¹ "Do It: Active Learning in Youth Ministry". T & J Schultz. p28

CHAPTER 2: The Theory of Active Learning

The theory of active learning or experimental education is based on the concept that the process of learning occurs through experiencing an activity (eg. outdoors, sports, group activities) and then debriefing or reflecting on the experience.

Possibly the best way of explaining the concept is to outline the two opposite approaches to learning. Both approaches are used at church, in Pathfinding, at home and in the classroom situation. The book entitled "Do It: Active Learning in Youth Ministry"² compares these two approaches to learning, as summarized below:

Passive-Learning Process

1. Information is received. Information reaches the students through a symbolic, coded medium: e.g. words, books, lectures, sermons. Students remember the information.
2. Information is organized. Students observe and understand a general, biblical principle.
3. Specific applications are derived from the biblical principle. Students perceive ways to apply the principle to their lives.
4. Knowledge is applied. Students act on what they've learned.

Active-Learning Process

1. Action is undertaken. Students share an experience in a particular situation.
2. Particular effects are understood. Students learn consequences from the situation.
3. A general principle is understood. Through active discussion, students discover the biblical principle at work in the situation.
4. The principle is applied. Students put their knowledge into action in a new circumstance.

Historical Outline of the Concept

The Old Testament has many examples of people learning through experience. Examples include:

- The Passover Service.
- The Sanctuary Service.
- Hosea and his wife Gomer.
- Ezekiel and the dramatic message God gave through him.

Jesus often used this technique. His method was encapsulated in His call "*come and follow Me*". The first disciples spent all night on the sea without a catch: after which, Jesus asked to use their boat to proclaim the good news. The remainder of this event has been broken down into the four stages of the Active-Learning Process.

1. Action is undertaken.

After Jesus has finished preaching He asks the disciples to put their boat out into the deep and throw their nets out for a catch.

2. Particular effects are understood.

They catch an abundance of fish. They realize that Jesus is more than a teacher, He is the Lord.

3. A general principle is understood.

If you put God first, He will provide all your needs.

² "Do It: Active Learning in Youth Ministry". T & J Schultz. P23,24

4. The principle is applied.

Jesus extends the invitation; they drop their nets and follow Him.

Jesus was often found 'doing' and then teaching from the action. Further examples are found in the stories of:

- The storm on the lake (Matt. 8).
- Healing on Sabbath (Luke 15).
- The woman caught in adultery (John 8).
- Washing the disciples' feet (John 13).

The Greek philosopher Socrates (470-399BC) and his pupil Plato (428-348BC) believed that asking questions was the way to facilitate learning. This general idea of education was not clarified until the end of the 19th Century and the beginning of the 20th Century. The American philosopher William James (1842 – 1910) became a strong advocate of learning through activity. He believed that activities should be fun, interesting, and relevant. Learning should be a whole person experience that should affect knowledge and behaviour, and should occur in a positive learning environment.³ Twenty years later, the American educator John Dewey (1859-1952) applied these concepts to education. He believed that the "education process is based on the human experience of movement from difficulty to resolution. After resolution comes reflection on the movement so that what is learned may be generalized and used again".⁴

A contemporary of John Dewey was the German, Kurt Hahn (1886–1974). As Jew, Kurt fled from Germany to Britain before the Second World War. He took William James' concepts and applied them to experimental learning in an outdoor setting. He found that in the outdoors, people could find themselves, gain self-worth and gain a positive outlook on their world. Kurt Hahn founded Outward Bound schools throughout the world. He believed in the 'Samaritan Principle', which is, when you do something for others you do something for yourself. Kurt Hahn, with his friend HRH Prince Phillip, facilitated the Duke of Edinburgh Award.⁵

Baden Powell (1857 – 1941) became a famous officer in the Boer War in South Africa because of the defence of Mafeking in 1899-1900. When he returned to England in 1903, he believed that boys could be taught the principal skills of outdoorsmanship, tracking and citizenship in an activity-based program. He held an experimental camp in 1907 on Brownsea Island and published his ideas in the book 'Scouting for Boys' in the following year. The boys of Britain, the Commonwealth and the rest of the world responded to this practical method of teaching and the Scout and Girl Guide movements came into existence. Baden Powell believed that active learning of outdoor skills made them better prepared for employment, developing a positive attitude towards themselves and others.

The Outward Bound School was adapted for the American scene. Out of this developed the Project Adventure organisation, which used challenging outdoor activities to stimulate the development of knowledge and character. This program began in 1971 and was fully developed by Karl Rohnke, Dick Pronty, Paul Radcliffe and Jim Schoel. They published such bestsellers as 'Islands of Healing', 'Cowstails and Cobras', and 'Silver Bullets'. They also popularized high ropes, low ropes, and crowd breaker learning activities for groups and individuals.

³ Article: G Donaldson William James. The Theory of Experimental Education. p94-96

⁴ Crosby April. A Critical Look: The Philosophers Foundations of Experimental Education. The Theory of Experimental Education. p79

⁵ Article: Sketch of a Morning Spirit. Karl Hahn. The Theory of Experimental Education. p39-44

Here is a flowchart of the development of active learning and its relationship to Pathfinders (Figure 1.1):

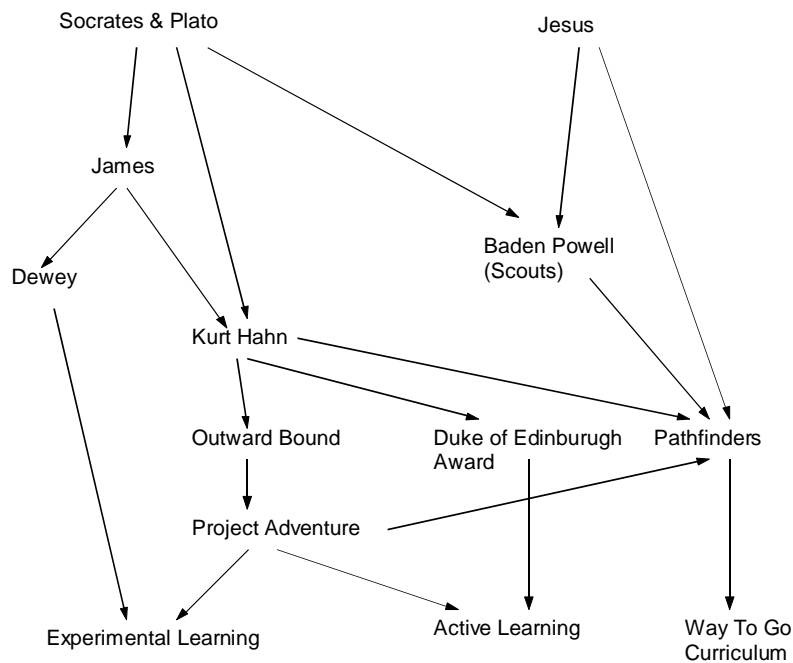


Figure 1.1 Flowchart of the development of active learning and its relationship to Pathfinding.

Advantages of Active Learning

Active learning is:

- Unpredictable – It is an adventure, an experience you enter with an unknown outcome.
- Fun – People enjoy the activity and discover that learning can be fun.
- All inclusive – Everyone is involved in the experience.
- Student based, not teacher based – The students make the discoveries. There may be a specific outcome, but it is expressed as the students experienced it.
- Discovered, not delivered – The discovery of the lesson has a greater impact on the student than the traditional method of receiving facts.

Edgar Dale, a Professor of Education at Ohio State University conducted a classic study on the effectiveness of various teaching tools that could be used in sharing knowledge. He ranked these in what is known as *the cone of experience*, illustrated below (Figure 1.2):

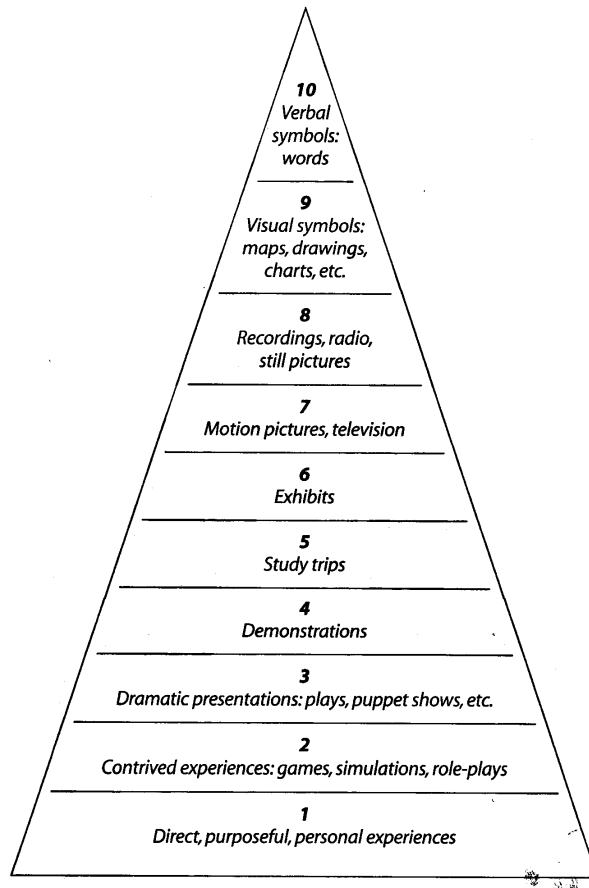


Figure 1.2 Cone of Experience⁶

Another study is also represented in "Do It: Active Learning in Youth Ministry". It looks at the average retention rate for different learning experiences as expressed in Figure 1.3.

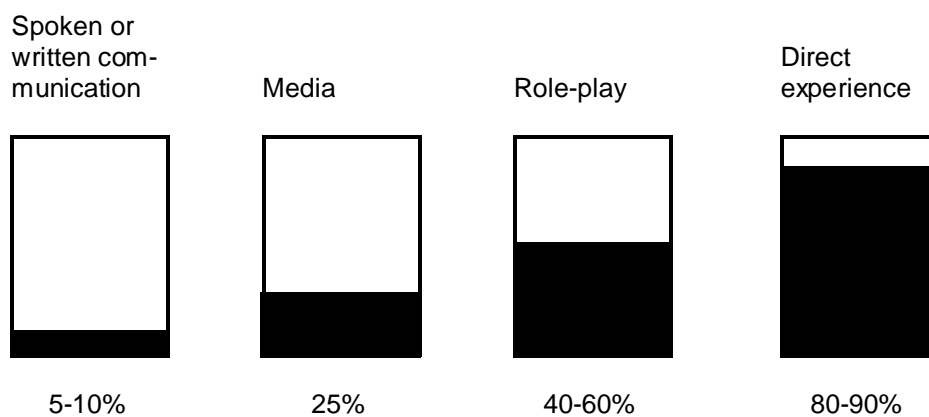


Figure 1.3 Average Retention⁷

Because everyone is involved in the activity and the debriefing process, there is interaction between the members of the group. Each individual is challenged to share a little of themselves and in doing so they develop fellowship within the group. This is the power of active learning.

⁶ "Do It: Active Learning in Youth Ministry". T & J Schultz p26

⁷ *Ibid* p27

Disadvantages of Active Learning

Active learning:

- Needs time to set up so that it happens right.
- Carries the risk of having a negative outcome.
- Requires lots of creativity and is resource-dependent.
- Requires adequate debriefing skills. If debriefing is not done correctly, the bridge between the game and the learning experience is not crossed.
- May be difficult for some people due different learning styles. The leader plays a very active role in the process of learning.
- Is open ended. This is both a strength and a weakness, as you may not meet the anticipated outcomes that you as a Pathfinder leader may want to achieve. This requires great flexibility on the leaders' behalf. You face the challenge of either letting the outcome go the way of the group or trying to direct the group to the correct outcome.

Summary

Active learning provides a positive way of teaching in an environment of fellowship, fun and adventure. It is a good breeding ground for developing spiritual awareness.

CHAPTER 3: The Process of Active Learning

The Active Learning Wave

The process of active learning can be illustrated as a wave as shown in Figure 2.1:

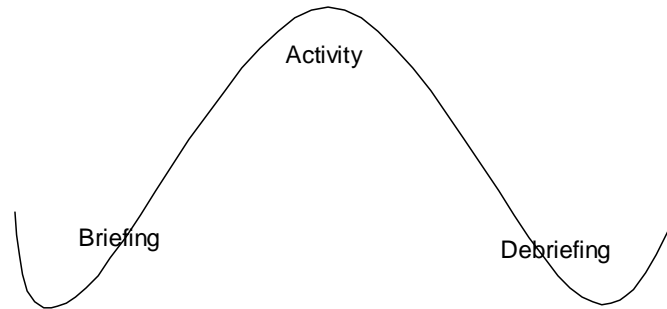


Figure 2.1 Active learning wave⁸

In Pathfinder language, this is the process of completing the activity. Briefing includes preparation for the activity, with all of the props needed ready for use.

Briefing

Briefing for an activity includes the following:

- Choose the activity.
- Set up the activity.
- Organise the activity – How it will happen? What are the rules?
- Consider safety aspects of the activity (OH&S).
- Participate in the activity - Members can choose not to participate.
- Raise questions before starting – Are we ready? Are we happy?

The Activity

As the Pathfinders work through the activity, this is a time for the leader to engage with the group.

The leader's role is to:

- Monitor the activity so that it operates within the agreed rules.
- Observe the dynamics of the group during the activity.
- Only intervene if there is a safety issue or inappropriate behaviour.
- Be adaptable. Be prepared to modify the activity if it is beyond the group's ability.
- Encourage the group as they work together.
- Maintain Occupational Health & Safety standards.
- Deal with any conflict situation before it gets out of hand.

The Active Learning Process

John Losey, in his book "Experiential Youth Ministry" adds a spiritual dimension to this active learning wave. He outlines the active learning process as a process that does not need to have an ending.

⁸ J Shoel Islands of Healing p 104

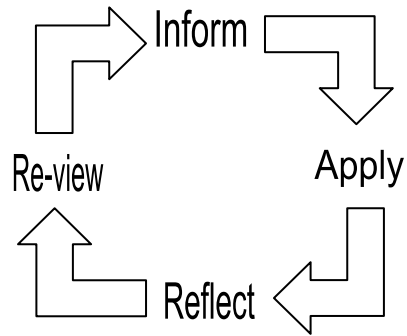


Figure 2.2 Active Learning Process

1. Inform. This relates to the briefing, and is the introduction of the activity. Joe Losey takes it a little further by calling it the traditional lesson time. This is the Bible study, presentation or sermon. This is when the "Theories, models and the concepts are laid out for us to consider."
2. Apply. This relates to the Activity. Teaching is applied through a real or simulated activity.
3. Reflect. John Losey inserts a period of time when the experience may be transformed to a deeper personal level. The participants are given time to individually think about the activity and how they may personally apply the briefing or information.
4. Review. This relates to Debriefing. The next chapter talks about what is involved in debriefing. This is the time when the group reflects on what the experience has meant to them.

CHAPTER 4: Apply Debriefing Skills

What is Debriefing⁹?

Debriefing is the process whereby the leader of the active learning experience takes time to lead the group members to reflect on the effect that the activity had on them, both as individuals and as a group. It is an interpretation of a programmed event (real or simulated), so that participants can apply lessons learnt to broader life experiences. It is something that few people do naturally, so in Pathfinding we introduce the concept of stopping, thinking and applying what we have just experienced.

In the case of a highly charged, emotional experience, debriefing is vital to 'de-role' from the experience. This is especially true when individuals have taken on roles that resulted in feelings of hurt, frustration, mistrust or conflict. The debrief is vital to allow the group to air their feelings and then move on from the experience, wiser than they were before.

Debriefing provides an opportunity to allow each group member to reflect on what the experience meant to them personally. It is not always appropriate to go straight into a debriefing discussion immediately following an activity. A quiet time of personal reflection before the questions begin may allow individuals time to personalize the experience.

Process of Debriefing

Debriefing should happen either immediately after the experience that the group has just been through or after a time of reflection. It must happen in the context of the experience, not at some other time when the lessons learned may be forgotten. It is a four step process. These steps are:

1. Reflections – How Do You Feel?
 - Get the group to voice their feelings about the activity.
 - Allow everyone the right to speak their own personal feelings.
 - Be prepared to hear what they say.
 - Assume a pose that denotes that you are interested in what each person is saying.
2. Interpretation – What Does This Mean to You?
 - Ask questions that allow individuals and the group to find the answers for themselves. Uncover the meanings or principles behind the activity or experience.
3. Application – What Will You Do About Your Experience?
 - Explain how the Pursuit impacts upon living in the real life.
 - What does it mean?
 - What can they change?
 - How can they learn?
 - What will they do with it?
 - How can they make this part of their life?
4. Commitment – When Will You Do It?
 - Ask the participants to make a commitment to the things that they have learnt. Just as they have actively participated now, they are challenged to take lessons learned and actively

⁹ This chapter is based on a summary of debriefing in the "Way To Go" Manual. Section 6 – Debriefing. CD 2003

incorporate them into their lives. This is a time of commitment that can be expressed publicly or privately. It can be written or in some other form.

- Remember that the important thing is to encourage participants to learn from life experiences, and to decide to make a difference in themselves or for others because of what they have experienced.

Debriefing the Activity

In debriefing activities, it is important to allow Pathfinders time to move away from the activity without any negative thoughts. They also need to be led into a positive learning experience where they are able to learn life skills about themselves, their community and their Saviour.

It is important for the leader to carefully bring the Pathfinders from an emotional experience to a learning experience that can have a positive impact on their lives. This may be done using the following steps:

- Focus on how they felt during the activity.
- Allow them to explore their feelings using "I" statements.
- If they appear emotionally affected, check whether their emotions relate to the role they played during the activity or their own personal circumstances.
- Listen and ask them how they plan to handle those feelings.
- Ask them why they reacted in a particular way.
- Get them to move around so that they are with different people and in a different place. Break the simulation experience.

Asking Questions

Reflection, Interpretation, Application and Commitment questions should be asked. These may include the following:

- What types of real life situations did the activity reflect?
- What types of situations bring out similar responses in you?
- What have you learnt about yourself?
- What have you learnt about the situations that the activity simulated?
- Are there other situations that the same lessons may apply to?
- Have any of your attitudes or beliefs changed as a result of the experience?
- How can you use this learning experience?
- What will you do differently from now on?¹⁰

Other Observations

- Try and develop thoughtful questions that require an answer.
- Don't swamp the group with questions. Allow time to respond.
- Use open-ended questions that require answers other than yes or no. Avoid closed questions.
- Keep to the subject being discussed by the group. It may not be the outcome you expected, but remember that in active learning the group is expressing their own thoughts and attitudes which may be different to yours.
- Use your body language to engage the group (i.e. maintain eye contact to engage the group, maintain an attentive posture).

¹⁰ CD – Way To Go Version 2. Way To Go Manual pp14

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