

# LESSON PLAN 5

## THE ENVELOPE



### ABOUT THE LESSON PLAN

**DURATION:** 30 minutes

**MATERIAL REQUIRED:** pens/ markers, flipchart, 25 objects x 2, 2 envelopes, working sheets

### OBJECTIVES:

The objective is to demonstrate that creativity is more likely to flourish under unstructured than under structured supervision, but also to stimulate creativity in the participants. , start-ups, or design companies.

### EXPECTED:

- Communication;
- Creative Thinking;
- Teamwork;
- Decision making.

### LEARNING CONTENT

Before introducing the game, assemble 25 objects and place them in an envelope (one envelope per team). The envelopes should be identical. The 25 objects from each envelope should cover a wide variety of materials.

Examples of objects: stamp, plastic spoon, highway map, small bag of ketchup/ mustard, sugar/ salt/ pepper packet, coin, stone, small pine cone, pill, little candle, key, piece of wire, nail, hair pin, pencil, pin, button, matches, beer can opener, earring, ring, napkin, magnet, notebook, etc.

#### **How to play?**

##### **Step 1**

Divide the group into teams of five to nine persons.

## **Step 2**

Appoint a leader for each group. The leaders are to function differently—some will be relaxed, encouraging, unstructured leaders (Supervisors A); the others will be more structured (Supervisors B). Each leader receives only his/her instructions in writing and does not see the other instructions.

The instructions to be given to the unstructured leader, Supervisor A – Handout 5.1.

The instructions for the structured leader, Supervisor B – Handout 5.2.

## **Step 3**

The best physical arrangement for the game is to have each group work in a separate room. A large room may also allow for privacy and noninterference from the other group(s). Instruct each group to stay together and not to talk to each other, or it will spoil the game.

## **Step 4**

Each team should have a table to work on, a flipchart sheet or two to record their categories, and a pen/ marker.

## **Step 5**

Have the team leaders hand out the following instructions to each member of their team when the task begins, but not before the group instructions – Handout 5.3, which are read by the facilitator of the lesson.

## **Step 6**

If there are enough people in the participating group, you can appoint observers, one for each team. Instruct them to look for factors which influence, help or hinder the creativity of the participants.

Instructions for the observer – Handout 5.4.

Introduce the game as follows

“We are about to engage in a game which will test the creative power of your group. I will now appoint team leaders and give them their instructions. Will the team leaders please step forward and read your instructions privately?”

After they have read their instructions, give them each the big envelope of objects and a group of participant instruction sheets. Call each group of leaders (A vs. B) aside separately to check if they have questions.

Tell them that their sequence of operations is as follows:

1. “Have everyone find a seat around the table.”
2. “Deliver your introductory remarks and get going. Do not pause for questions since the participants are being given an instruction sheet.”
3. “Pass out the participant instruction sheets and dump the 25 objects on the table. This is the signal to begin to work.”
4. “Conduct the task for ten minutes.”

After all teams have done their work, have the team leaders post their flipcharts to the wall and count the number of categories their groups produced. Groups will explain their choices.

Experience with this game indicates that these results will typically ensue:

1. The structured team(s) will perform less well than the unstructured ones. Why? Because structure inhibits creativity: “If you give Johnny a paint brush and ask him to paint a horse, you’ll only get a horse. But if you say: ‘Johnny, draw whatever you like,’ you may get the Mona Lisa.”



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2. Sometimes both kinds of teams have a tie, or nearly so. If so, the question is: “If lectures don’t make a difference, why give them? Why run the risk of smothering creativity with a lot of patter? If you over-communicate, the group has two problems: the assigned task and how to cope with the leader’s input about the task.”

3. If, as a less likely possibility, the structured team wins by a large margin, ask the observer what produced the creativity. Also, tell them that this result is unusual, for typically the added structure tends to confuse people, slow down the group, and inhibit its creativity. Conclude the discussion by asking participants to draw on their own experience concerning the impact of high/unnecessary structure on creativity.

## TIPS FOR FURTHER READING

<https://www.trainingcoursematerial.com/free-games-activities/creative-thinking-activities/25-objects-game>

## HANDOUTS

- Handout 5.1
- Handout 5.2
- Handout 5.3
- Handout 5.4