

Lesson Plan 18: Overcoming Barriers to Participation**1 hr 30 min total****Lesson Description**

In this lesson, participants learn about systemic and individual barriers to participation and discuss how these barriers can be addressed. These concepts are essential to ensuring that those who need to attend workshops are present and can fully participate.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this session participants will be able to:

1. Identify barriers to equitable participation.
2. Evaluate methods for promoting equitable participation.

Materials

- Markers
- Flip chart paper
- Tape
- Paper or blank cards
- Equality vs Equity* image (See lesson plan)
- Option 1 Intro: Race**
 - A "prize" to retrieve during the race in the introductory activity
 - One small piece of paper for each person. Half of the papers should be blank. The other half should have one of the following phrases:
 - "You cannot separate your legs"
 - "You can only move sideways"
 - "You must have both hands touching the ground at all times when moving"
 - "You cannot run"
- Option 2 Intro: Ball Toss**
 - One piece of paper for each participant
 - An empty container such as a box, garbage bin, etc.

Preparation

- Read and prepare lesson plan
- Option 1: Find a large space (inside or outside) where participants can run around without running into things or hitting each other.
 - Prepare the blank pieces of paper and the papers with phrases specified in the materials list
- Write the definitions of individual and systemic barriers on a piece of flip chart paper

- Write learning outcomes on the flip chart
- Print 4-5 copies of the *Equality vs Equity* picture

Introduction**15 minutes****Option 1:**

This activity is suitable for smaller training environments and/or those which do not have available outdoor space.

1. Explain to participants you are going to play a game. Each person will be given one piece of paper, and will need to throw it into a “goal.”
 2. Place the box, garbage bin, etc. in the front of the room near a group or row of participants. Explain this is the “goal” for the activity.
 3. Tell participants in playing this game they cannot move from their seats, they cannot stand up, or move around. They can only sit in their seat and throw their paper.
 4. Distribute one piece of paper to each participant. Tell them to crumple it into a paper ball.
 5. Ask participants to throw their paper balls into the garbage bin.
 6. After all participants have thrown their paper balls, reflect on the following:
 - “Which people were more likely to succeed?” The people closest to the goal were most likely to get their ball into the goal, while those farthest away experienced the greatest challenge.
 - “How did the people close to the goal feel?” “How did the people far away from the goal feel?”
 - “What could we have done so that everyone in the game had an equal opportunity to succeed?” We could have changed the rules of the game; have removed restrictions; altered the layout so everyone was equally distant from the goal, etc.
 7. Tell the participants: “In this lesson, we are going to look at how to break down barriers to participation.”
 8. Present the learning outcomes or lesson description.
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Option 2

This activity is suitable for larger spaces and/or training facilities which have outdoor space available.

1. Explain to the groups that they are going to have a race. The object of the race is to be the first person to get to a prize on the other side of the room. Place the prize on the other side of the room. It should be far enough away to make the game interesting.

2. Tell participants that they are going to receive a piece of paper detailing what they can and cannot do during the race. They should not tell others what their restriction is - they should just follow it during the game. If a person receives a blank piece of paper, it means they have no restrictions.
3. Hand out the papers.
4. If the space permits, have everyone do the race at the same time. If not, do the race in small groups. Ensure that in each small group half of the participants have restrictions.
5. At the end of the race, ask participants to answer the following questions:
 - "What happened during the race?" *Only one person was able to retrieve the object in question. Some people lagged far behind because of the restriction they had been assigned.*
 - "How did you feel about what was happening in the race?"
 - "If you think of the race as a metaphor for a workshop, what did people's restrictions represent?" *Challenges that we have that stop us from participating in a workshop effectively.*
 - "What did the prize represent?" *Knowledge and Skills.*
 - "What could you have done to ensure that everyone was able to get a prize?" *Have enough objects for everyone. Place the objects closer to the people with restrictions.*
6. Tell the participants: "In this lesson, we are going to look at how to break down barriers to participation."
7. Present the learning outcomes or lesson description.

Defining Equitable Participation

20 minutes



1. Present participants with the *Equality vs Equity* image and discuss.
2. Ask participants to discuss with a partner and then share in the full group: "What does 'equitable participation' mean?"

Equitable comes from the word equity which means fairness or justice in the way people are treated. When we talk about equitable participation we mean ensuring that everyone in the group is treated fairly and has the opportunity to take part fully in activities.



3. Ask participants: "How does this differ from equality?" *Equality focuses on treating everyone equally, whereas equity focuses on providing those who require it with increased opportunities in order to achieve equality in outcomes.*
4. In two to three groups, ask the participants to discuss the following question: "What barriers to participating in a workshop are you aware of or have you experienced?" These can be barriers that prevent participants from attending the workshop, as well as barriers that prevent participants from actively participating in the workshop once they are already present." *Provide some examples: low literacy, shyness, sickness, location, etc.*

5. Give numerous pieces of paper or blank cards to each group. Ask them to write one barrier on each. If there are low literacy participants in the group, ask participants to draw a picture beside the barrier to represent it.
6. Ask the groups to share their barriers alternating turn by turn. As they present each barrier, ask them to tape the paper or card with the barrier to the back of a chair – one barrier per chair if possible. If a barrier is presented by one group, the other group does not need to duplicate it.
7. As they add barriers, ask participants to place the chairs in a circle. At the end of the activity there should be a large circle of chairs. At the centre of the circle place a piece of paper that says “equitable participation”, and explain that the chair represents the barriers to accessing equitable participation.
8. If you don’t have chairs available, use physical obstacles that will create a distance between the participants and the words "equitable participation." Choose obstacles that can be removed one at a time.

Classifying Barriers

20 minutes



1. Post the definitions of individual and systemic barriers on the flip chart.
2. Explain that the barriers the group identified can be classified into two groups:
 - *Individual barriers: Barriers that come about due to an individual’s personal limitations. These barriers might include: back pain, hearing problems, shyness, sight problems, slow/quick to speak, etc.*
 - *Systemic barriers: Systemic refers to something that is spread throughout – that affects a whole system or group of people. Systemic barriers include beliefs, policies, practices, or procedures that discriminate against certain groups of people (sexism, ageism, racism, classism, homophobia, ableism, etc.).*
3. Ask participants to organize the chairs with the barriers into two circles: an outer circle with systemic barriers and an inner circle with individual barriers.
4. Explain that if they disagree with where a chair (barrier) has been placed they can move it to a different location.
5. Summarize how the chairs have been organized by drawing a diagram on the flip chart with the two circles of individual and systemic barriers.



(Burke, Geronimo, Martin, Thomas, & Wall, 2002)

Breaking down Barriers

30 minutes



1. Explain to participants that they are going to discuss the ways different barriers can be removed.
2. In pairs, ask participants to select two or three barriers. They should have at least one individual and one systemic barrier. Ensure that one group is tackling racism and another is working on sexism or gender.
3. Provide a piece of flip chart paper to each pair to record their strategies, and approximately 10 minutes for the pairs to discuss and write down strategies for addressing their barriers.
4. Have each pair present their strategies to the large group and discuss.
5. If the large group agrees that the strategies presented will be effective for breaking down a specific barrier, the chair for that barrier can be removed from the circle.
6. Continue until all barriers have been addressed, the chairs or objects removed, and the word “equitable participation” can be physically reached.
7. Ask the participants to think individually and then discuss as a full group:
 - “What are some similarities in the strategies for removing each of the barriers?”
 - “What differences (if any) did you notice in how systemic and individual barriers are addressed?”



To reduce the length of this activity, ask participants to select the barriers that are most significant in their context and then share solutions for only these barriers.

Review

5 minutes



1. Ask participants to consider in pairs: “Which of the barriers do you find most challenging?” What strategy would you use to address it?”

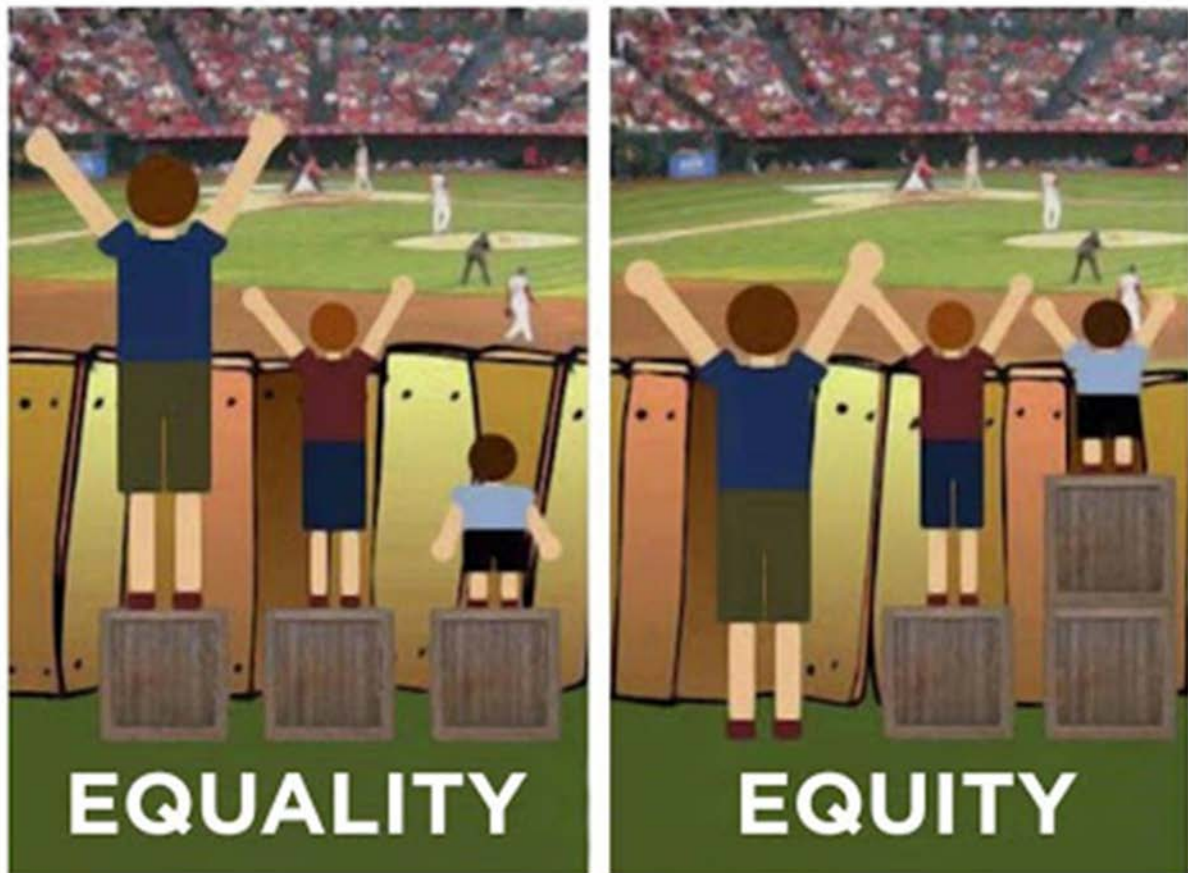
References

Burke, B., Geronimo, J., Martin, D., Thomas, B., & Wall, C. (2002). *Education for Changing Unions*. Toronto: Between the Lines.

The Equity Line. (2014). Retrieved from <http://theequityline.org/wp/2014/03/12/equity-and-equality-are-not-equal/>

Reflections on Lesson

Equality vs Equity



(The Equity Line, 2014)

