

Installation Standards

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- Our connection with the CWA will make clear where the work needs to be done in the development of our own climbing wall standard, if it becomes necessary to do one.

Engineered Systems

We have written a standard to guide us in the evaluation of pre-engineered systems. A common pre-engineered system is an auto-belay device (retractable lanyard). Engineered systems also require special consideration. An example of an engineered system is continuous belay systems, where the installer does not create the system on site, but it is engineered and fabricated elsewhere.

Current Committee Members

Rich Klajnscek, Project Adventure
John Lazarus, Northeast Adventure
Jack Moeding, Preferred Safety Products
Josh Tod, Rope Works
Chuck Treadway, Chestatee

Consulting/Boy Scouts of America
Tom Zartman, Alpine Towers

The committee is hoping to have a draft of the new document done before the end of the year. We will be hosting a session at the conference in Boston where we will discuss and be able to answer your questions about the standards. Our hope is that this revision will make the document easier to interpret and applicable to a greater variety of challenge course designs.

The new document will be published as part of the Seventh Edition of the ACCT Challenge Course Standards. There is no anticipated publication date yet for this document.

Sequencing

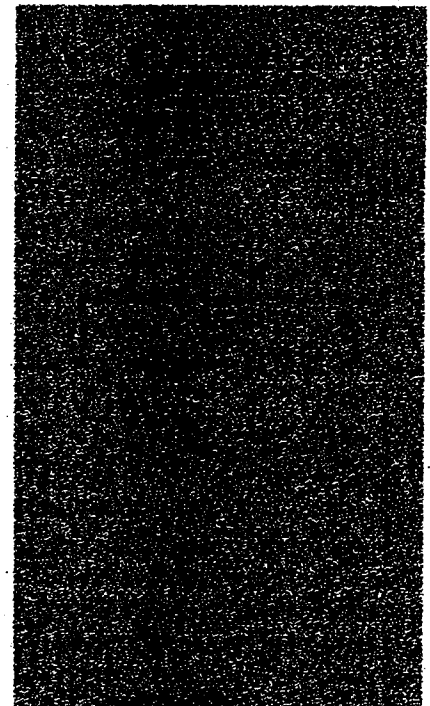
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appropriate touch in a simple tag game. This introduces the idea of appropriate touch and close personal space important to the spotting techniques necessary on the challenge course. It also helps me evaluate whether the group is engaged and ready to take the responsibility of balancing fun with safe, focused behavior.

- Communicate with the program leader or previous facilitator about the group and their goals, expectations, and personality before you meet with the group. This is imperative. Keep in mind that you will always have to balance that information with your own perceptions and experience of the group.
- Use informed consent, which is critical. Let a group know what they are in for. Think about informed consent as empowering participants with needed information. For some settings, informed consent is a responsibility of the facilitator in liability situations.
- Inform the group about the upcoming activities, but you don't have to give away the novelty of your approach. If difficult or reluctant students make a choice not to participate, they will at least know what opportunities they may miss.
- Observe your group continuously and re-evaluate your plan.
- Be sensitive to the time of day and physical environment when presenting activities.
- Take time to build relationships and trust between group members.

- Be prepared for the unexpected.
- Take advantage of teachable moments.
- Choose activities that build upon each other.
- Be willing to let go of your agenda to meet the needs of the group.

Many times I have carefully planned out activities and prepared supplies for a group in advance only to completely let that plan go after the group has shown me that they had very different needs than I expected. Each individual class always varies in their response to activities as well, gleaning different insights and lessons from the experience. That is the beauty of what we do in experiential facilitation. We meet people where they are and nurture spontaneity of experience to take advantage of teachable moments.





Facilitator's Toolbox

by Jennifer Stanchfield

Sequencing

Sequencing or intentionally ordering activities is one of the most fundamental aspects of effective challenge course facilitation.

Sequencing involves consciously and thoughtfully presenting activities in a specific order to maximize learning and the emotional and physical safety of the group. Being thoughtful, observant, and intentional in your planning, presentation, and evaluation of activities is one of the most important aspects of effective challenge course facilitation.

There is no specific formula or "correct way" to sequence programs. Approach sequencing as a dynamic process that takes into careful consideration the group's goals and agenda, participant's emotional and physical safety, the personality and dynamics of the group, available activities, allotted time, and the physical environment.

Effective facilitators pay attention to the group development process and allow time for trust building. It is important to balance the level of the activity and/or challenge presented with the participant's ability to meet the challenge or activity. Group leaders need to continually observe their group to be sure the activities they select fit the needs and goals of the group and the specific situation.

The time needed for participants to create relationships and build trust is different for every group. When this connection and sense of community is developed, groups will take learning further and get more benefit out of the group activities they engage in. Allow time for this to happen by

choosing activities that build upon each other.

When sequencing activities, be sensitive to the time of day and the physical comfort and attention span of participants. Being flexible as a facilitator when dealing with the unexpected is key. Listen to your group and be prepared to change your plan midstream to adapt to the ever-changing needs of the group and to take advantage of new opportunities for learning that emerge as a group works together.

I have found that even when working with different groups with similar characteristics in the same setting, with the same program goals, the actual lesson plan changes with each group in response to the group's emerging unique personality and needs. Every group has a different personality and participates in activities in different ways. I see this often in my work with school classrooms.

In some of my classroom facilitation experiences and when leading challenge course and facilitation training workshops at High 5, the topic areas were consistent and the planned activities were similar with each group, but what each class actually participated in and accomplished together was different. Activities you carefully plan prior to a workshop or group session may be specifically relevant for one group's personality and needs and not another's. This is one of the exciting aspects of group facilitation. There is great variety in group experience and opportunities to take advantage of teachable moments. Facilitators develop the art of reading their group and adjusting activities

in a creative way throughout group process to move learning and change forward.

Careful sequencing maximizes participation by allowing people to engage at a pace that works for them. Experiential group work can be very powerful. If groups are ready to engage in the process, great things can occur. Conversely, if a group is not emotionally or physically ready to encounter certain "learning adventures," the experience could be damaging or inhibit growth and learning. Effective facilitators always approach activities with intention, thoughtfulness, and flexibility—always evaluating their group and refining their plan as they need to.

Sequencing Suggestions

- Be ready with a continuum of activities. It is important to have a repertoire of activities that build upon each other. Having activities in your "back pocket" allows you to be ready to deal with changes in direction and learning opportunities that arise in an ever-changing group.
- Be flexible enough to throw out or let go of that well-developed plan if the group needs are different than expected.
- Use "indicator" activities. Know some activities that help you read and evaluate the group. For example, at High 5 before going up to the challenge course and teaching safety systems, I facilitate a fun, partnered tag activity that involves moving around in a small space and using

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