



ECSU Student Center and Student Activities Office *Co-curricular education for student organizational leadership*

→ EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ←

One of the most effective ways to learn about yourself and others is through experience. Experiential learning is beginning to replace the board room in organizational development. It is used to improve organization communication, group dynamics, decision-making ability, individual empowerment, shared leadership ... the list is extensive! Eastern Connecticut State University has its own experiential learning program offered to you through the Career Service Office located in Wood Hall.

The Student Activities Office offers you an effective and fun way to improve leadership abilities among your members and strengthen your student organization as a whole. Please stop by and check out our resource library.

There are several reasons why your organization may wish to request an experiential learning program:

- | | Experiential learning can help! |
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| ◆ You don't really know each other. | A two to four hour program will give you the chance to appreciate the variety of members' talents and skills that may not show up in regular meetings. |
| ◆ You're looking for an educational opportunity. | Experiential learning is a great way to expand your horizons and learn something new about yourself! |
| ◆ You have an organizational problem you'd like resolved. | Highlight and deal with such problem areas as lack of communication or decision making ability. |
| ◆ Your organization is affiliated with a professional field that benefits from experiential learning (business, education, therapy, etc.). | You may want to explore and experience some of those applications first-hand. |

THE PROCESS

Depending on your specified outcomes, experiential learning leads you through a tailored progression of activities that may contain some or all of the following: New Games, Low Elements, Team Initiatives and High Elements.

Games

Cooperative group games, some of which have been around for centuries, are very effective in group development. They allow group members to learn each others' names and become comfortable in this new setting. These activities usually require minimal props and can be done almost anywhere. They are used primarily with organizations that are new or have many new members.

Low Elements

Low Elements are activities less than eight feet high that require no helmets, belay, or special personal equipment. The Swinging Log, Tire Traverse, and Tension Traverse are just a few of the low elements offered. They are usually more individual events that require the group to simply provide a safe experience for each participant. Low Elements build trust among group members, improve individual self-esteem, and teach the importance of group support and teamwork.

Initiatives

Initiatives are problem solving activities designed to focus on group skills such as communication, decision making, cooperation, competition, and collaboration. Initiatives include Log Crossing, the Team Wall, and Stepping Stones. Many of these activities use portable props so they can be done both indoors and outdoors.

High Elements

High elements are activities done above eight feet that require special safety equipment such as a climbing harness, helmet and belay. These elements are used when groups have achieved a high level of trust and desire personal challenges to explore their ability to react to potentially high stress situations. High elements are the final step in the progression towards team unity.

REFERENCE

Adapted from: St. Norbert College, Department of Leadership, Service & Involvement

*Additional resource handouts are available as well as consultation services.
For more information, contact the Student Activities Office in the Student Center at 465-4450.*