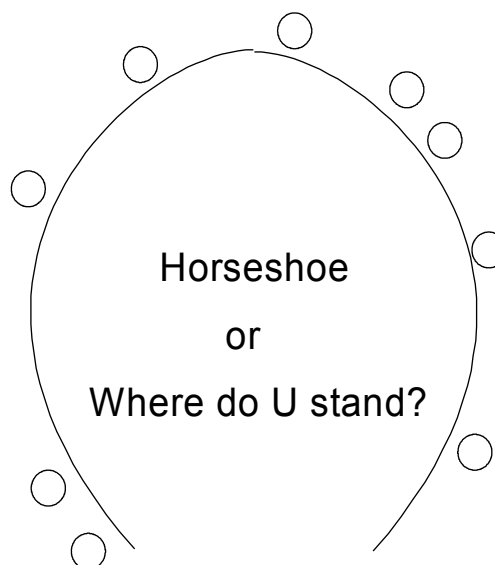


Horseshoe

Horseshoe is a scaling exercise in which learners show where they stand on an issue by where they (physically) stand on a curved spectrum. Horseshoe kick starts group discussion by making each person's point of view visible and (optionally) by giving everyone preparation time by first speaking with a 'friendly neighbour'.

- *Horseshoe* is also known as 'Where do U stand?'
- *Horseshoe* is a scaling exercise in which learners show where they stand on an issue by where they (physically) stand on a curved spectrum.
- Horseshoe kick starts group discussion by making each person's point of view visible and (optionally) by giving everyone preparation time by first speaking with a 'friendly neighbour'.



Why would I use Horseshoe?

- To provide an accelerated start to group discussions.
- To quickly discover the range of views on an issue, and then...
- To prime group discussion by giving learners the opportunity to clarify and justify their positions (initially with a friendly neighbour)
- To create a platform for group discussion in which learners naturally show an interest in each other's chosen positions.
- To improve the range and quality of contributions in group discussion.
- To bring rarely heard voices into group discussion. These voices are often the more reflective ones - producing greater learning for all.

What do I need for setting up Horseshoe?

- A rope is useful for marking out the horseshoe shape. Make the rope about 25% longer than would be needed for the group to stand side by side on it.
- Alternatively, use well-spaced chairs to mark out the horseshoe shape. If there is not enough space in front of the chairs, move the chairs forwards and use the space behind them.

How to facilitate Horseshoe

1. Ask a question that can be answered on a scale: "*On a scale of 0 - 10, how much can you influence global warming? 0 = nothing I do will make a difference. 10 = I can make a difference.*"

2. Everyone stands in position on a curved spectrum. (To prevent a sheep mentality you can first ask everyone to write down a number and the reason for choosing it.)
3. Ask neighbours to discuss (in 2s or 3s) why they have chosen their position e.g. why they are not standing further that way or this way.
4. Ask if anyone wants to move in either direction as a result of their discussion and let them do so.
5. Bring attention to the overall pattern of distribution and invite comments.
6. Ask everyone to notice where individuals are standing and ask, "*Any surprises? Any comments? Any questions?*"
7. Encourage learners to move as and when their views change and invite them to explain why they are moving. Also ask stationary learners why they are not moving. (There is no hiding place - nobody escapes attention!)
8. Facilitate discussion for as long as it is productive.

Tip: When asking people to talk to a neighbour say, "*In twos or threes but not in fours*". Explain, if needed, that *twos* would get bored if waiting for everyone in a *four* to have their say. Alternatively, pair people up starting at one end of the line. If it is an odd-numbered group you can be the partner of the 'leftover' person. If everyone is in a pair, involvement levels are higher than in *threes* and you have a better chance of getting the pace right for everyone.

Things to watch out for

- **The tendency for discussion to focus exclusively on the extremes.** Solution: ensure that attention is also paid to other views. You may wish to add that the wisest people are standing at the midpoint of the group spectrum and that is where the group representative or group leader would come from (even though some may gravitate to the middle just to hide or go with the crowd).
- **People getting aggressive and differences being exaggerated.** Solution: ask for a view from the middle. Or insist on the rule that people only speak if invited to do so. Or emphasise that the purpose is to try to understand the views of others and to both see *and* hear what others have to say.
- **People getting tired or restless while standing.** As with any 'standing up' exercise, what starts out as 'dynamic' can become static and tiring if conversation is sustained for some time without further movement. Solution: be prepared to ask a series of related questions that can be answered on a spectrum. Also be ready to improvise with a new question if the discussion of the primary issue leads into a related issue that can also be explored on a spectrum. Or consider converting the *Horseshoe* discussion into a *Turntable* discussion (see next).

Variations

- **Turntable** is a close relation of *Horseshoe* and the two methods can be used well in combination – see '*Turntable*'.
- **Scaling exercises** (that show where people stand on a spectrum) usually use straight line scales. These are easier to set up, but in any situation where you want the *group* to see who is where on the scale, or where you want to generate group discussion, the curved horseshoe shape wins on all counts.
- **Scaled questions** (questions that can be answered on a scale) create more scope for

discussion than closed questions with yes/no answers. Before asking a closed question, consider whether it would be more interesting and productive to convert it into a scaled question asking 'How much do you agree with the statement that ...?'

- **1-2-Many** is another element of *Horseshoe* that you can apply without using the whole process. '1-2-Many' is a more developed form of 'pair and share'.
 - '1' = choose a position.
 - '2' = find a partner nearby (a 'friendly neighbour' who is likely to agree with you).
 - 'Many' = a whole group process (that is more dynamic than a round of 'sharing').

Horseshoe: plus, minus, anything

+ What usually happens is that the most outspoken people ask the first questions. You now have the louder participants asking questions and showing an interest in others - rather than giving all the answers.

Horseshoe develops new skills and habits for both quieter and louder group members. Its equalising effect helps to establish the norm that discussion is for everyone and not just for those who are quick to answer. It also encourages reflection by everyone before entering into a whole group process.

- Discussion can be divisive and exaggerate differences. (see 'Things to watch out for' above).
Standing around can get tiring. (see 'Things to watch out for' above).

∞ You will never want to use straight line scale again – in a group setting.
Horseshoe can provide a good start and finish to Turntable – see next.



For a glimpse of *Horseshoe* (Where Do U Stand?) in action see the video introduction to the Active Learning Manual at:

<http://www.activelearningmanual.com>



For more descriptions of active reviewing methods see Roger Greenaway's Guide to Active Reviewing at:

<http://reviewing.co.uk>



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Turntable

- *Turntable* is a dynamic format for lively discussions that explore different sides of an issue.
- Participants sit in a circle that is divided into 2, 3 or 4 sections. Each section represents a different perspective on the chosen issue. Every minute or so participants move to their left. After one circuit, everyone will have had the chance to speak from each of the perspectives.
- Turntable is a 'role play' exercise because learners are encouraged to speak on all sides of the issue and may find themselves expressing views that they do not hold.

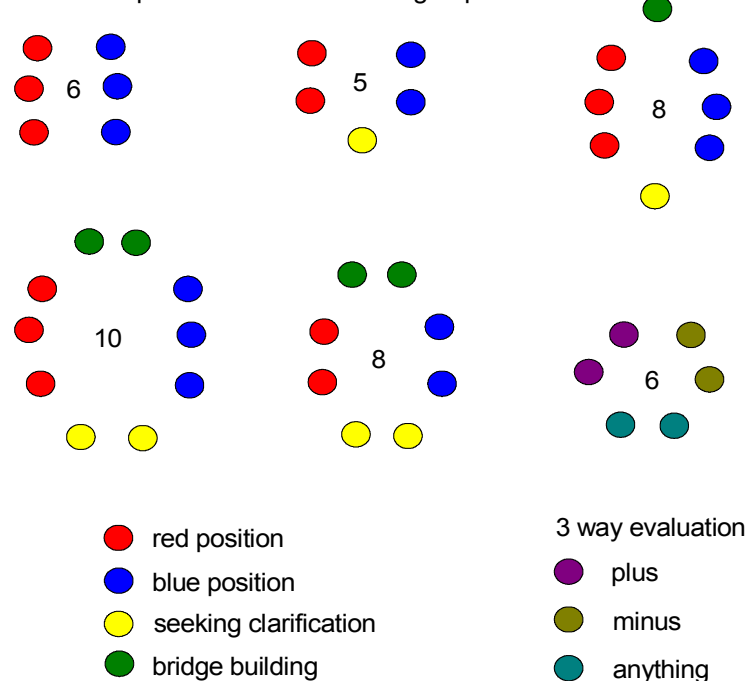
Why would I use Turntable?

- To enable learners to explore two or more sides of an issue.
- To generate a lively discussion that allows everyone to 'change their tune' at some point.
- To allow learners to enjoy the fun of contradicting themselves when they argue against their previous position.
- To develop discussion and debating skills while exploring the issue under discussion.

What do I need for setting up Turntable?

- The simplest form of a *Turntable* discussion is to set up two teams facing each other. Each team sits in a semicircle facing the opposite team.
- In groups of more than 6 people, include some neutral seats between the two sides. These can simply be 'listening' seats, but you can add value by allocating facilitative roles to people in these seats such as 'bridge builder', 'seeker of clarity', 'diplomat' or 'negotiator'.

Turntable options for different sized groups



How to brief Turntable

- Explain the purpose: *“By speaking from a viewpoint that you do not hold you see the issue from a different angle and become more understanding of different viewpoints even if you do not change your own view.”*
- Explain the process: *“In this exercise, you may find yourselves saying things you don't really believe. That's OK. You are allowed to adopt an attitude that is not your own, but you should not make up untrue facts to support your case. Use your talent to promote the side you are (temporarily) representing. If you do criticise what others say, criticise their views*

but do not criticise or offend the person. Every minute or so I will stand up as a signal for you to move one or two places to your left."

Judging the pace of Turntable

- Take the role of timekeeper when you first try this method, so that you can use your judgement and be flexible. There are many variables to consider, but aim for one complete circuit taking about 10 minutes.
- If groups are working independently, your briefing should include briefing a timekeeper who gives the cue to move round by standing up. If you are the facilitator you can be more flexible with the timing.
- One circuit should take about 10 minutes. So if there are 10 in a group that means moving one place to the left every minute, or two places to the left every two minutes. In a group of 5, learners would move one place every two minutes. If any 'side' has only one seat, it is better to move one place at a time so that all learners get to sit in that seat.
- Experiment with timings that suit the topic and the group. The pace should not be so fast that participants do not get a fair chance to speak up while on a particular side. If it is going well, there is no reason why you cannot continue for two circuits. If so, you may want to adapt things a bit second time round.

Tip: If the chairs are too close you can get 'gridlock' when everyone stands up, so space out the chairs a bit more than for a typical group discussion.

Things to watch out for

- **learners being misunderstood or being unsure of each other's real views.** This is a role play exercise and learners may find themselves expressing views when 'in role' that they do not want to be associated with after the exercise. Solution: End Turntable with a 'Horseshoe' spectrum just outside the circle of chairs – so that people can show their real views by standing by the chair that most closely represents their view.
- **Participants getting too aggressive.** This method was originally named 'Revolver'. If people mistakenly thought 'weapon' rather than 'revolving' this would make the debates more aggressive. *Turntable* is designed as a tool for conflict resolution, not conflict generation – which is why it has been renamed. 'For and against' debates tend to be more aggressive than discussions in which you compare the merits of two or three different solutions. Encourage learners to give most of their attention to promoting their own side's view and to keep 'negative campaigning' (criticising other views) to a minimum.

Variations

- **Turntable with a large group.** For a group of 20, you can create two groups of 10 to operate independently. Alternatively, have an outer circle of 'listening chairs' included in the rotation. A better way of including more numbers is if you discuss a topic in which a third view is worth exploring. In fact, three-way or four-way discussions are generally of a higher quality than two way discussions.
- **Turntable with recorders.** If you want to capture the best comments and questions or occupy more participants, then have static recorders seated behind each team who then sum up the key points at the end.

- **Join in as a participant.** Consider the pros and cons of joining in as a participant. By moving round with the learners you can take part in the discussion on all sides and thus provide a good role model for how to contribute in this exercise. Alternatively, you can remain in the facilitator's chair throughout.
- **Horseshoe** is a variation that can also be used in combination with *Turntable*. Using a quick version of *Horseshoe* at the start means that people will start *Turntable* in a 'home' position that is close to their real view on the issue. This provides an easy starting point for *Turntable* because learners will be mostly sitting in a position that reflects their real views.
- **When people or furniture are less mobile.** Instead of people moving round, the roles move round. Options:
 1. Hats represent roles: hat-wearing people represent one view, hatless people represent the other view.
 2. Rope colour: two differently coloured ropes tied in a single circle – those holding the red section represent one view, those holding the blue section represent the other view.
 3. If using a 4-sided turntable, simply use symbols for the facilitative positions: e.g. bridge-builders hold a picture of a bridge, clarifiers hold torches, dictionaries or other object signifying clarity.

Turntable: plus, minus, anything

- + It provides the opportunity to step into the shoes of others and see an issue from different sides. It can provide greater insights into the views of others as well as into one's own viewpoint.
- Although Turntable is a very simple concept, it needs a bit of practice and tuning to get the most out of it – and to prevent it becoming a slanging match (or a silent procession).
- ∞ The normal rules of civilised discussion still apply: one person speaking at a time and people inviting each other to contribute.

The neutral seats (bridge builders and clarifiers) often bring out the most insightful and intelligent comments. These roles are sometimes the most significant ones.



For a glimpse of Turntable in action see the video introduction to the Active Learning Manual at: <http://www.activelearningmanual.com>



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