If you review experiences in a hurry and cut corners, don't expect great results. The good news is that you can learn how to make the most of just a few minutes - and get reasonably good results. There is always time for a quick review!

So when you next find that 'review time' is fast disappearing, refer to the tips below for quick reviews of 1 minute, 2 minutes, 5 minutes or 10 minutes. By developing the art of quick reviewing you can make the most of opportunities that might otherwise be lost.

Even if you have all the time you want for reviewing, your learners will appreciate a variety of pace, activity and style during longer reviews. You may sometimes want to re-focus long reviews with a quick exercise. For example, you can introduce visual methods to assist communication, use action replays to lighten the mood, make use of dynamic techniques to bring ideas to life, or conduct instant surveys to gauge opinion.

If you find that you are always short of time for reviewing, step back and work out why. The usual reason why people run out of time for reviewing is that it comes at the end of a session. So consider ending a session with a quick review, and starting the next session with a longer review.

Starting a session with a review has many advantages. It certainly increases the chances that learners will make connections between activities. It also increases the chances that learners will be refreshed and alert for reviewing - not tired and longing for a break.

The simple strategy of taking breaks BEFORE reviews instead of AFTER reviews has many benefits - but it may not always be the best choice.

Another useful strategy (when short of review time) is to carry out quick reviews DURING an activity. You can do this by building reviews into the activity in advance, or just by looking out for good opportunities to review - and using them!

The techniques described below are 'flipchart-free'. Most require no resources at all and can be used anywhere at any time. With such minimal resource requirements, you will find even more time for reviewing!

### 5 x 1 MINUTE REVIEWS
A lot of valuable information can be shared in just one minute. Quick sharing exercises that raise awareness and appreciation of each other can have a big impact. You can also refer back to these 'checkpoints' in longer reviews.

#### 1.1 CHECK MOOD STATES
To bring out mood changes, ask each person simultaneously to show their mood state using simple signals such as thumbs up or down (or in between). Choose a few points during the activity to see mood states at each point. If you want everyone to see each other's signal, first get in a circle, then (at each set of signals) ask "Any surprises?"

#### 1.2 CHECK ENERGY (FUEL GAUGE)
To discover energy levels, ask each person simultaneously to show their energy level using simple signals. For example: with each person using their body as a fuel gauge, hands on head = full of energy, hands on hips = half full, hands on feet = nothing left. If you want everyone to see each other's signal, first get in a circle, then (after each set of signals) invite comments. Use this method to compare energy levels at the start and finish. If time allows, ask what would help to restore or re-charge energy levels.

#### 1.3 THREE WORDS
"Choose three separate words (not a phrase) that describe what you experienced during the activity." Allow 30 seconds thinking time, then
share in a round. This is usually much quicker than doing sentence completion in rounds. And it often happens to be an example of "less is more" - a lot can be communicated in just three words (after a bit of thinking time).

1.4 POSITIVE FEEDBACK FOR THE GROUP
"10 good things about you as a group during the activity." Encourage comments from within the group, but throw in some yourself. Go beyond 10 if you can - mainly because the first few comments (however valid they are) tend to be vague and clichéd. With this method, quantity brings out quality because comments tend to get more specific. End by asking what they will carry forward to the next activity.

1.5 TAKE TIME OUT (MID-ACTIVITY)
Don't always wait until the end of the activity to review. All of the above techniques could also be used at 'half-time' or any time during the activity - for example, during natural breaks, while waiting for a turn, while having a rest or snack, while sheltering from the weather.

**5 x 2 MINUTE REVIEWS**
If you have only 2 minutes, say very little, keep things simple and focus on positives.

2.1 STORY TELLING IN ROUNDS
Without any practice or planning and against the clock (say 2 minutes) the group are challenged to tell the story of the last activity in rounds. Each person may say only one word (or punctuation mark) when it is their turn. This is a fun communication exercise requiring a lot of concentration.

2.2 THREE PICTURES (MAGIC MOMENTS)
Brief moments of personal reflection (with eyes closed, facing outwards or lying down). For short reviews keep a positive spin. Focus on what participants are pleased about, or pleasantly surprised about. For example:
"Picture three 'magic moments' from the activity that you would like to remember. Picture 1 is something you did or said. [pause] Picture 2 is something another person did or said. [pause] Picture 3 shows a magic/good moment for the whole group. [pause]"
This is a very brief version of 'Guided Reflection'.

2.3 FREEZE FRAME or VIDEO CLIPS
Snapshots or short video clips of moments that participants want to remember (e.g. Fun, success, improvements, surprises, discoveries, insights). If these moments are caught on camera and you can provide instant replays - go ahead. But I much prefer asking people to recreate these moments AS IF they had been caught on camera. This is much quicker, more active and more creative. 'Freeze Frame' is an active way of sharing thoughts from 'Magic Moments'. You can also launch straight into 'Freeze Frame' without preparation. For more on replays see [http://reviewing.co.uk/stories/replay.htm](http://reviewing.co.uk/stories/replay.htm)

2.4 POSITIVE FEEDBACK FOR ALL
"2 good things about each person during the activity." Encourage comments from within the group, but ensure you have positive comments ready to give to each person in case anyone receives little or no feedback. Positive feedback boosts self-confidence. And by highlighting examples of positive behaviour, you increase the chances that participants will learn from each other's examples.

2.5 BUDDY TIME
"Talk in pairs about ..." (Pick a success theme such as examples of leadership or humour or caring or effort in the group.) Alternatively, buddies give positive feedback on each other's performance during the activity. To encourage a balance of giving and receiving positive feedback, each person takes turns to make one positive comment at a time.

**5 x 5 MINUTE REVIEWS**
In 5 minutes you may have time for more open questions. A 5 minute review in a whole group of 10 allows an average of only 30 seconds air time for each person. Extend the methods described above or try out the methods described below.

5.1 FORTUNATELY, UNFORTUNATELY
The group tell the story of the last activity, taking...
it in turns to say just one sentence beginning with 'Fortunately ...' or 'Unfortunately...'. Go round the circle one at a time. Allow passing. This is called an 'Alternating Round'. Depending on the pair of sentence beginnings you choose this can help to create a balanced view of what happened. This is especially useful when a group seems over-confident or under-confident.

5.2 ACTIVE LISTENING
While you tell the story of what happened, participants show their feelings at the time. Using head height or hand height they can show their ups and downs. Moving in and out of a circle they can show how much they felt involved in a group activity. Using gestures and facial expressions they can show anything they want to. To encourage communication with each other, start off in a circle. Invite help with storytelling if you need it.

5.3 INSTANT ACTION REPLAY
Instant action replay of whole (or part) of the activity in the time available. Explain that you have the remote control and will be using various buttons e.g. fast forward, rewind, pause, slow etc. - and may invent some new buttons. No time for preparation. If time allows, take a risk and hand over the control.

5.4 CONNECTING TO LAST TIME
Use 'Alternating Rounds' to investigate questions such as: "How was this like/unlike the last activity?" "In what ways did you perform better/worse as a team compared to the last activity?" To develop a positive view, ask: "In what ways did your performance in this activity show that you have learned something useful from the last one?"
The group respond with action replays, verbal responses or both.

5.5 CONNECTING TO THE NEXT ACTIVITY
"Show me what you want to take from this experience into the next activity." Sub groups prepare short mimes or replays. Alternatively, individuals choose objects to represent what they want to take forwards.

5 x 10 MINUTE REVIEWS
10 minutes may allow time to explore issues, but is there enough time for everyone to have their say and end on a positive note? Extend or combine the methods described above, or try out the methods described below.

10.1 ROUNDS AND ORBITS
Take it in turns to complete a given sentence beginning chosen by you or by the group. End with appreciation or looking forwards. For examples see http://reviewing.co.uk/rounds.htm

10.2 MEMORY GAME (STORY TELLING)
The challenge is to talk through what happened in detail. One person starts in the storyteller's chair and continues until they are challenged or give up. The challenger takes over until challenged.

10.3 INSTANT REPLAY IN THE STYLE OF ...
Instant action replay in the style of ... You or they choose film or TV styles through which to present their replay, e.g. News Report, Tellytubbies, Shakespearean, Documentary with voice over, Cartoon, Soap etc.

10.4 WHERE DO U STAND? (HORSESHOE)
Each person shows their position on an issue by where they stand on a curved line. Discuss the issue with neighbours, then in the whole group. End by checking if positions have moved.

10.5 SPOKES FOR GOALS & EFFORT
"What did you see as the top three priorities for the group during the activity?"
Everyone stands in a circle just out of touching distance from each other. Place an object at the centre that represents priority #1. "How much effort did you each make towards achieving that priority? If you (as an individual) made 0% effort, stay where you are. If you made 100% effort towards achieving priority #1 stand in the centre. Give yourself a score out of 100 and move to that point on your 'spoke'. Look around. Is there anyone you think should have placed themselves closer to the centre?" If time allows, repeat the process for priorities #2 and #3.

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**5 x 20 MINUTE REVIEWS**
You now have many more options, including bringing together what has happened in shorter reviews.

20.1 STORYLINE (HAPPY CHARTS)
Making and sharing personal storylines showing each person's ups and downs during the activity. Encourage participants to look for differences, similarities and surprises. Encourage questions such as "What made you feel so high/low at that point?" "Why did your mood turn round at that point?" "What could you have done to have raised your own happy level or someone else's?"

20.2 SCAVENGER HUNT
Individuals or pairs have a list of symbolic objects to find and share with the group. Examples: Something that reminds me of a high point. Something that represents how I am in this group. Something that represents what is missing in this group or a goal that I would like us to set ourselves. A symbolic present for the person on my left in the group circle. Something that represents an opportunity I would like to have in this group.

20.3 GUIDED REFLECTION
Participants lie down with their eyes closed while you talk through the activity with suitable pauses that give them time to reflect on their own thoughts and feelings. After 5-10 minutes, end with an opportunity for everyone to speak to each other one-to-one - especially if the guided reflection leads into a suitable topic such as thanks, appreciation, encouragement. Or invite each person to make a statement to the group, such as "What I like about being in this group and what would make it even better".

20.4 CHAT CARDS
For a group of 10, write down 5 review questions that you want to ask, each on a separate card. Explain that the purpose is to become an expert on your partner's views, and warn that anything you say to your partner may be shared in the whole group. Shuffle and deal one card to each pair who discuss the question for 2 minutes before passing it on. In the whole group, discuss each question, but with participants speaking only for their partners. Cards are not essential for this process, but they do help to keep pairs focused on the question.

20.5 DISCUSSION
Facilitate open discussion, introducing techniques (if needed) to encourage participation from everyone in the group. Use any of the above techniques to help focus, accelerate or deepen the discussion. You may well need much more than 20 minutes to conduct a review discussion that respects the diversity of feelings and opinions in the group AND that generates new insights AND that encourages further exploration. Many of the reviewing techniques described above can help to get review discussions off the ground.

TIME TO STOP: TIDY vs. UNTIDY ENDINGS
Once you raise or explore issues, there are no guarantees that you will come to a tidy endpoint within the time available. The best you can do might be to establish where you have got to and what remains unfinished. Providing that there is no distress, untidy endings can sometimes be better for learning than tidy ones.

A 'tidy' ending might be a new insight or a new commitment or something you want to try. An 'untidy' ending might be wanting to change but not knowing how, or having a question you want to explore, or recognising a problem you want to solve. However you finish a review, try to keep the momentum going and keep people thinking about connections.

You now have a tidy list of 5 x 5 ideas. The untidiness is that you have yet to decide what to do with them. I hope you will try some of them out and let me know how you get on - or send in some of your own tips for 'quick reviews'.

This page is an extract from Issue 4.1 of the free monthly e-newsletter 'Active Reviewing Tips'.
http://reviewing.co.uk/archives/art/4_1.htm

Also see 'Reviewing When Short of Time' in Active Reviewing Tips 11.3
http://reviewing.co.uk/archives/art/11_3.htm

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