

FACILITATION TECHNIQUE	Read it Once
CORE PURPOSE / FOCUS	#issue analysis #discuss challenges
PHASE	#energizer
SKILL / CONTENT	#multi-tasking #self-reflection #communication
TIME FRAME	Up to 15 minutes; up to 30 minutes;
GROUP SIZE	1-5 / 6-15 /16-30 / more than 30 persons
FACILITATION LEVEL	Skilled
COMFORT ZONE	Stretch

Introduction

Explore the limitations of trying to do two things at the same time.

Necessary tools (what you need)

- Pick Online whiteboard tool or Slack or Google docs, pick a tool that allows to use a large, zoomable canvas.
- Video conference tool of your choice and availability.
- Copies of the handout, The Wooden Horse (three different versions) in word or any other suitable format.

Steps

1. **Prepare the various versions** of the document and distribute them to your breakout groups either with a direct link to a Google Doc, breakout group chat channel, or via email.
2. **Brief the participants.** Explain that you are going to conduct a reading test that involves a short paragraph.

3. **Distribute the handouts.** Give each person a copy of the handout from the common stack. Do not point out that there are three different versions of the handout.
4. **Give instructions to the participants.** Explain that their task is specified on top of the handout. Emphasize that they should read the paragraph only once. Ask them to begin reading.
5. **Ask the three questions.** After a suitable pause, ask the participants to close their documents. Tell them that you are going to ask three comprehension questions and they should write down the answers. Ask these questions:
 - *When did the craft of carving Dala horses begin?*
 - *Why do the Swedes love horses?*
 - *What are the colors of the horse described in the paragraph?*
6. **Check the answers. Give these answers:**
 - 18th century
 - The Swedes like horses because they pull logs in the Winter and help the farmers in the Summer.
 - Red, yellow, and green

Ask the participants to raise their hands if they answered all three questions correctly. Congratulate these participants.
7. **Check the number of doubled letters.** Ask the participants to tell you the total number of doubled letters in the paragraph. Announce the correct answer of 13. Congratulate the participants who gave the correct answer (or a close approximation.)
8. **Explain the differences in the reading task.** Tell the participants that there were two different tasks (of reading for details and mentally counting the number of doubled letters). One group of participants was asked to perform both tasks.
9. **Discuss the limitations of multitasking.** Ask the participants who had to perform both tasks to talk about their experience. They will probably report hesitation and frustration. Explain that this multitasking group performed least effectively on both tasks.
10. **Relate the jolt to real-world experiences.** Ask the participants for examples of multitasking activities that they perform. Discuss the conditions under which multitasking could produce effective results.

Tips & Tricks

- If you do not have breakout sessions, keep everyone in the main room, though invite pairs and groups to communicate in private messages or small groups in Slack.
- When briefing the exercise and assigning the pairs or groups to work together, keep all participants in the main video conference room and explain best practices.

Source

<http://www.thiagi.com/archived-games/2015/2/6/read-it-once>

