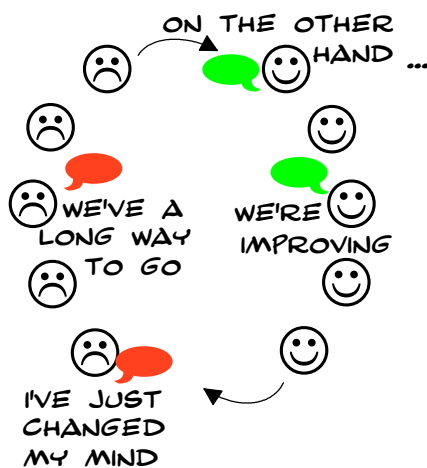


How can you change the normal pattern of participation once habits have formed? Learn how to create new social geometries to facilitate participation. In 'Turntable' students change places to explore different viewpoints; in 'Horseshoe' the starting point is a silent statement; in 'Talking Knot' the normal pecking order is changed.

Turntable: changing your view

Turntable was inspired by a competition in which everyone was a winner. It was a game of volleyball in which the rotation after each point included one person from each side moving to the opposite side. When the final score was announced everyone on the court had spent as much time on the 'losing' side as they had on the 'winning' side. Everyone was trying just as hard to win points as in a 'normal' game, so everyone walked off a winner having enjoyed a great game together. This little bit of background is important because it helps to explain the spirit of 'turntable'. Putting time aside to play such a game would explain it even better.

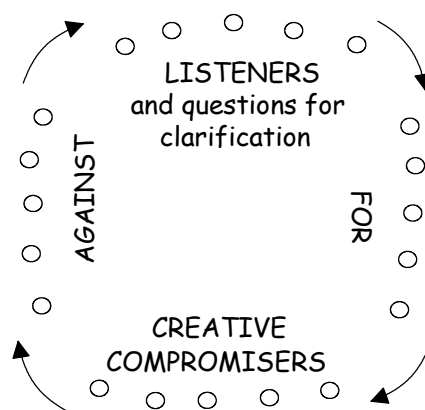


a 2-way turntable discussion

The simplest form of a Turntable Discussion is to set up two teams facing each other in a semicircle. This is how I would brief a discussion about teamwork: *When you are sitting in this semicircle you are positive and optimistic about your performance and progress as a team; but when you are sitting*

in the opposite seats you may only take a pessimistic view noticing performance problems and slow progress as a team. So that you don't get stuck in one position and to give you the chance of achieving a balanced view you will be spending roughly equal time on both sides of the argument. 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 argument, and you should not be cruel to people when you are expressing negative views. Every minute or so I will stand up as a signal for you to move two places to your left.

The ideal group size for Turntable is 10: five-a-side. For a group of 20, I would create two groups of 10 to operate independently or 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, four way discussions are generally of a higher quality than two way discussions.

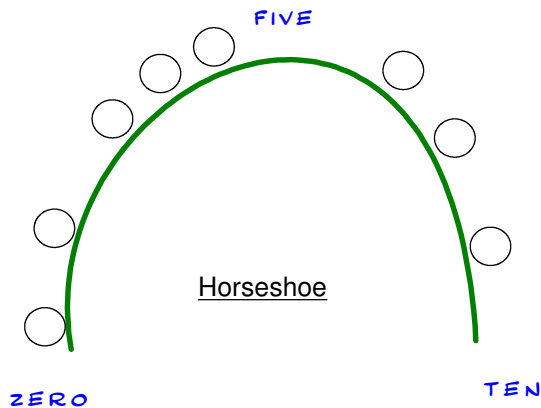


a 4-way turntable discussion

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. The topics are limitless - so I will ask you to create a huge list relating to your own subjects and activities. One word of warning is that this is a role play exercise and students

may express views that they do not want to be associated with after the exercise. The next exercise (Horseshoe) gives everyone a chance to show their real views on the issue.

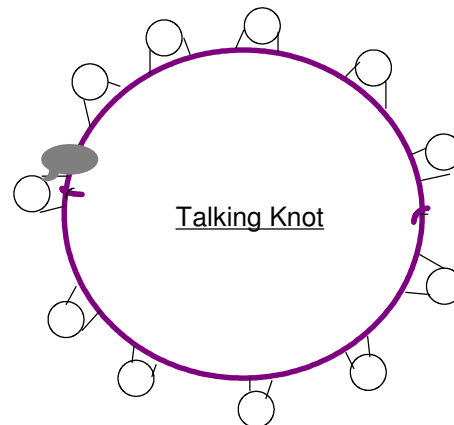
Horseshoe: showing where you stand



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 writes down a number and the reason for choosing it and then stands in position on a curved spectrum.
3. Ask neighbours to discuss (in 2s or 3s) why they have chosen their position.
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. Given a natural tendency to focus on the two extremes, ensure that attention is also paid to other views.
8. Encourage students to move as and when their views change and invite them to explain why they are moving. Also ask stationary students why they are not moving. (Nobody can escape attention!)
9. Facilitate discussion for as long as it is productive.

Several features of Horseshoe make it easier for students to take part in a discussion. Tips and variations will be discussed on the day.

Talking Knot: having your say



Talking knot belongs to a family of turn-taking techniques that includes the Talking Stick, the Conch and Rounds. Talking Knot has several unique benefits.

- Everyone feels involved all of the time because they are holding on to the rope.
- People choose when to speak by stopping the rope when a knot is between their hands. Because there are 2 or 3 knots there is more variety and interest than the very predictable pattern of rounds.
- Opportunities to speak are frequent, but the pressure to speak is typically low - so people usually speak up only when they have something they want to say.
- The dynamics can be odd, but interesting. In the simplest version there is a question knot and a statement knot. Some questions may not get an answer. Some people choose to answer their own question when the statement knot arrives.
- The knots can be as open or as specific as you want: you can change the meaning of each knot by tying a new question onto a knot (using a luggage label).

Experience this technique to discover how it works and to experiment with variations.

Acknowledgements and further reading

Jim Cain, author of *Racoon Circles*, introduced me to Talking Knot. Turntable and Horseshoe are my own designs. Also see 'Discussions' and 'Encouraging Participation' in the resource list at <http://reviewing.co.uk/earcos>