

Beginning PSHCE

Journey into process – becoming a PSHCE facilitator for the first time

- **Lesson plans for the first time you meet your classes**
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- **Games for ice breaking and energising**
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This chapter is essential reading for anyone who has not taught PSHCE before. It shows you how teaching PSHCE is different from teaching other subjects. The way that the class learns together – the process - is how they learn PSE . The successful PSHCE teacher works through negotiation and co operation giving responsibility for the learning to the pupils, but without compromising their own, firmly held, bottom lines.

Section Two:Page 16-22 :Lesson plans for the first time you meet your classes

PSE is about sensitive issues .Your classes need time to bond and learn to trust sufficiently to share and listen respectfully if they are going to get the most from PSE. This section gives you ideas about how to approach your first few lessons. Building a safe environment through trust building games. Begin the programme of study only when you feel you are all ready to learn its lessons and from each other.

Note on using games: I am limited in what I can include here because of copyright. In some cases I have given the title of a game, in others I have described how to play it . Donna Brandes has books of games and there are others around. You need to choose the games that suit you and that you feel confident to play with a group. It is essential for deep learning to take place that the games are debriefed and children understand what the purpose of the game is. They need to understand how each game is helping them develop their social skills, overcome their shyness and develop confidence. Ultimately people are employed, and progress in their careers, for their personal qualities, not their qualifications, which they may share with everyone else present at the job interview.

More help for absolute beginners can be found In the chapters on circle work, dealing with sensitive issues and special circles in “Theatre of Learning: Making RE Make sense” by Sue Phillips.

Section One :

Journey into PSHCE - making the transition from teaching your specialism to working with process.

No one teaching PSE starts off as a specialist. Yet teaching PSE is transformational. Teaching PSE *effectively* means turning everything you are used to on its head and taking big risks. It is uncomfortable and scary. Like everything else worth doing it takes time and practice, but once you get the hang of it, it will change you forever.

- Your relationships with children (and with everyone else) will dramatically improve.
- Your range of teaching techniques and skills will increase hugely. Your awareness of what is going on in your classroom - will develop profoundly.
- Your ability to deal with challenging situations and prevent confrontation will improve.
- You will become a teacher who works empathetically and with the whole person.

Every teacher should have the opportunity to learn how to teach PSE.

The important thing is, though, that you do have to *learn* how to do it. That takes time . It takes confidence . It can be painful but it is so worth it because when you get it right and the pupils respond, then you have learned something that is with you for life - whatever, whoever and whenever you teach.

PSHCE is about Process. It is fundamentally and primarily about **how** you deliver the lesson not what it is about. If you don't get process right, they won't learn anything - that they take out of the door with them, that is.

Why is PSHCE so different ? because the *outcome* is different.

Look at this example: A lesson on climate change in science. It is a lesson on climate change . It is effectively taught and learned

when pupils are able to respond accurately to a series of questions and activities and where they demonstrate their knowledge at their target level or grade.

But that is not the *only* outcome or even *any* outcome in a lesson on climate change in PSHCE

If those young people go out of your lesson without changing their actions ie turning off the lights, doing some more recycling or being less wasteful then you have quite literally wasted your time - whether they behaved or they didn't, whether they got level six , or A* or not.

Now, any science teacher will tell you that they also want pupils to change their pupils behaviour(and this is where effective citizenship education comes in) but we all know that this is not the way the effectiveness of their teaching will be measured.

If we look at the same topic taught in PSHCE then the information is merely *the vehicle to create the feeling, the conviction, the determination that leads to the action.*

Now, apply that principle to the variety of topics we teach in PSHCE, Healthy eating, smoking, alcohol, drugs, sex education, human rights, the environment, communication skills, bullying, government and politics, race

All these subjects are taught in other places on the curriculum so why have a whole *separate* curriculum area. In those lessons The information is being given – but not, necessarily, the attitude. Everything in PSHCE should focus on transforming how the pupil *feels* about the topic.

Successful PSHCE is about

- **raising awareness
and then**
- **changing behaviour**

The latter happens through choice – you need to create the climate in which pupils will make that choice

That is why the *method*, the *process* is so fundamental. If PSHCE lessons are not going well then the process is not right. You are not going to learn it overnight. If you are walking a rocky road at the beginning it will be because you haven't got the process right. Its not the children and its not you. You could be a highly experienced teacher who has few behaviour problems in your specialism but how long did it take for you to get there? Now , if you are teaching PSHCE you are a long way from your comfort zone you may be struggling with new subject knowledge but also with new ways of delivering it .

You can stick with your familiar teaching methods and they will work to a certain extent but you are likely to be faced with unreflective compliance if you are an experienced member of staff where pupils will do your bidding unquestioningly, rising to levels of poor behaviour and lack of value for the subject, where you are less experienced.

One of the hardest and bitterest pills I had to swallow and accept was when the pupils said to me "This is boring" was that it was ! and when they said "this has no value" that they were right. Accepting this was the most painful moment of a twenty year career and it was the moment that the Theatre of Learning was born.

This is how I came to become a specialist in PSE, gradually, over time and quite bewildered by it all.....certainly not overnight as you may be trying to do!

I came to PSE through working with Key Stage four in the late eighties. When I was asked to set up a course at my old school .I was puzzled by not being allowed any text books. I did not understand how PSE was different from other subjects. If I had to deliver careers and health education then where were my books and worksheets?

I had year ten for a whole morning on a Friday for six weeks on a carousel. I did not write my own lessons but learned through the process of teaching lessons devised by others and through practical sessions taught by advisors at termly meetings. It all seemed very strange!

At the same time I was training as a counsellor on a two year evening course. I had enrolled on that because I thought it would be t help me teach the P bit of PSE and so my school helped fund my training . *What I really wanted was to build up my own practice so that I could leave teaching altogether.* Thirteen years into my career I was ground down by poor behaviour, exhausted by being constantly angry, shouting, punishing and the negative attitude to RE. “Why do we have to do this ? I don’t believe in God. My parents say it’s a waste of my time.” We could not recruit an exam class. I taught “O” level to half a dozen pupils before school, lunch times and after school – for years.

What actually happened was that the counselling training taught me so many things about how to deal with people, which of course included children, that I began to change the way I was with them. I started to *negotiate* instead of telling . I began to change from my confrontational style. I had fewer problems in the classroom and I had more energy.

At the same time I came across Donna Brandes “Student Centred Learning” and her books of games. I had had them on the shelf for ages, but now I was ready to listen . Her words, and they were very revolutionary, made sense. I was fortunate enough to have two residential courses with her . At the end of this I was totally convinced that she was right and suddenly all this process stuff made sense. *But its not easy to put it into practice.* It doesn’t happen overnight.

I began to try some of the techniques out with *one nice class*. I asked them how they felt about the idea of working in a circle. They were intrigued . We tried it out and talked about how it felt - better - we practised some games and listening techniques, it worked ! We had fun , we began enjoying being together. What was happening in the classroom became real. We were all ourselves. That also included me being very much in charge, but as a facilitator, not a despot.

I tried it with other classes. By the time I came to my next post where I was appointed as PSE coordinator, I was *absolutely convinced* that the techniques worked and there was no better way of doing it . I was

confident enough to use them with every class from day one because I was convinced I would get every class there and I knew by then how to deal with saboteurs and so I wasn't phased by them.

How different for you if you have just joined the PSHCE team and have never used a circle in your life !

If you are going to enjoy teaching PSHCE you need first of all to understand *in your head* why process is so important. Then you need to *try it out with one nice class*, having first negotiated with them. You need to go in *very slowly* discussing with them how it feels.

You need to play together

The play needs to be planned, structured by the teacher. but feel spontaneous and fun for the class.

- The class will be relaxing and getting to know each other in a different way
- This in itself will begin to build trust
- Your confidence will grow and they will have a positive expectation of the lesson..... *then you can begin to learn together.*
- It may take half a term of working with a new group before you can begin the topic, such as human rights or healthy eating.
- When you do begin the topic it will be taught using the same principles that you have been using as you bonded.
- It is like sitting round the fire passing on the wisdom of the tribe.

Gradually, in my own learning process, it became obvious to me that it was the *process*, the actual *teaching techniques* that made PSE such a success.

During those early days I devised a whole morning session where the group worked on a story called "the island". There was no music and no artefacts, just talking in a circle, creating a story.

Debriefing (The plenary)

At that time we were taught that *debriefing* a session was vital. At least 15 minutes of any PSE lesson should be spent debriefing. It is

what we call the plenary. It became second nature to me to unpick the *process* of the learning with the children so that all the time it made sense. For example **making up a group story** is fun and a great technique for teaching pupils to work in a circle. The teacher starts a story. Here is mine

“One day I opened the door of my house all ready to go to school and there, sat outside my house, where my car should be, was a large pumpkin, all hollowed out with four seats, and there in the driving seat was a large yellow banana. In the back sat three more bananas smiling and waving. “Come on !” said the banana at the wheel, Get in we’ll be late” I stopped and the next person had to continue it and so on round the class.

the speaker has to make sure that the story is always left on a cliff hanger so you don’t say and” they all went home” or” they all died” When they have finished their sentence or two they look at the person on the left and it carries on .

Its great fun the story gets more and more bizarre as it goes on , people can pass if they wish, and it carries on round the circle more than once, perhaps, until it comes to a natural end, then we debrief..

What skills does it develop?

First all the group work ones are reinforced

- Concentration
- Listening
- respect
- bonding
- support
- no put downs

but, then , we realise its doing something deeper..

- coping with something unpredictable that lands in your lap – you can’t plan what you are going to say !
- thinking on your feet
- acting spontaneously
- performing in front of an audience

- developing confidence in public speaking.
- learning to use your instincts to deal with a problem.
- learning to operate at a level beyond rational thinking.
- taking a risk.
- learning to be the centre of attention.
- being a crucial part of a process.
- what it is most like in real life is a job interview or answering the telephone to a tricky customer, dealing with a problem that appears out of the blue.

This is how most good PSHCE games work. The game is fun but in the debrief we recognise the importance of what we were doing.

Games are of fundamental importance to PSHCE. They are the means by which we learn the process

- Some help us learn names (cushion throwing)
- or mix up our seats so we sit next to people we don't know. (fruit bowl)
- Some force us to speak to people we don't know. (pizza, human bingo)
- Some require us to use co operation and touch (building a machine)
- Some require us to use trust (Fallback)
- Some are energizers, waking up our brains and getting the whole group involved (Zip zap boing, rabbit ears)
- Some build team spirit (rule of the game, detective, job interview)

In the early days a structured programme of games builds the group, makes sure everyone knows everyone and builds a climate in which everyone can work together without put downs. A vital component being that pupils look forward to PSHCE. It should be lively, energetic and full of fun, but also create a space in which deeply serious matters can be meaningfully discussed.

Learning all this took me several years because It was so different from my textbook lessons behind desks which was how I taught RE in those days, long before the Theatre of Learning. **You need to give**

yourself time to learn.

I came to my new as coordinator of PSE in 1991, to deliver specialist PSE to year ten and eleven and to provide a tutor programme (worksheet based) for year 7-11. I had not met any of the team, all of whom taught other subjects, some were, unknown to me, disaffected.

PSE was a source of behaviour problems. I knew nothing of this. I wrote to every team member telling them how I would like to introduce active circle work with games, listening skills and ground rules and to teach an active course on sex education to everyone from the beginning.

I sent the letter out with lesson plans in the holidays. I will never forget the reaction of the staff. "Great ! we're bored, we want to try something new, we will give it a go". The reaction among the children was astonishing .They loved it, there were really very few problems. It was a welcome break from exam preparation for pupils and staff. Staff took on board the non confrontational approach to the pupils very successfully.

What has changed since then ? Citizenship gives us a formal subject content and we teach PSCE as a specialist subject to key stage three, too.

There is a difference between the key stages and their response to PSHCE !

- Key stage four pupils respond well to talking and discussion in a circle
- They are at a stage where they are thinking seriously about life, risks and their future
- Lessons may be characterised by calm, reflectiveness, talking and listening, **the negative response is apathy**
- Key stage three pupils are still children. Their concerns are different
- They have shorter concentration spans. They are less responsive to listening and discussion, but most of all they are lively !

- Key Stage Three children are characterised by energy, restlessness, the need to move about, to complete activities rapidly, to learn through information, primarily, with some reflection. With Key stage four the position is reversed
- Key stage three children, especially the younger ones, may also be more empathetic than older ones so that compassion for others can be developed easily.
- All school pupils are self absorbed, and self conscious, increasingly so as they get older
- Every single one has a strong sense of justice !
- Our challenge is to balance this concern for justice for themselves with concern for others which is the heart of the human rights programme in year nine.
- They all need to reflect from time to time on the importance of impulse control and that actions have consequences

Solution: Key stage three children need to step back and play games in a circle for several lessons until the ethos of the class becomes positive.

- Saboteurs need to be brought on board (see my chapter on working in a circle and dealing with saboteurs in “Making RE Make sense “ pub SfE.) or if they are persistent put to work with other classes , outside PSE, for three weeks while you establish a positive ethos in the group.
- Saboteurs are needy children whose buttons are being pressed by the nature of the lesson.
- Saboteurs are often desperate for attention – any !
- They are helped by realising they *will* get it in the lesson – along with everyone else
- The circle enables all children to contribute equally or pass.
- Children who are silly should be placed outside the circle and their contribution not be accepted for a brief period. They should then be asked back into the group and accepted without comment
- Being outside must be a brief sting. It is essential that they are welcomed warmly back quickly before resentment builds up
- The disapproval of the group can be made clear without any put downs. They must not be permitted from anyone, least of all you !

Each lesson at Key stage three needs to be fast moving with a variety of activities which lead the pupils through a process with just a small amount of listening and lots of action

Here is the pattern that is worked for me on a commute between sites in our split site school.

1. Greet pupils outside class .

- Tell them that they can enter when they hear the music and go to their seats – you may wish to ask them to stand by the seats.
- This means they enter your space, you have made it yours even though its not your classroom.

2. Lesson menu, including aims, on A3 blu tacked to board. music plugged in.

- Pupils come in to energising rock music.

3. Teacher stands by the door greeting them as they come in, coats and jewellery off, “hi how are you today, nice to see you.”

- Fade the music and greet the pupils

4. Remind them how to build the circle.

- Where do these desks go ? Where are we putting the chairs?
- Each desk must be returned to its present place
- Each person has responsibility for putting a desk back where they are now
- Circle must be perfect with no extra seats and a spare one for me.
- Litter from the circle must be removed.
- Every person sitting in the seat and able to see everyone
- Must be completed by the end of the track.

5. Build the circle

Begin when they hear the music – Three minutes - play fast rock music loud - it generates excitement and pace . If any one is silly no music!

Ground rule: No pupils can ever use their own music – it creates dissatisfaction and issues of fairness and “I don’t like this, why cant

we? .. “ .No. Teachers choice only, ever and always ! – or , no music!

- The circle is completed
- Teacher fades the music, praises the pupils while putting on some gentle ambient music which will play through out the lesson and joins the circle introducing the lesson as they do so as they do so that this transition is smooth.

The lesson begins

1. **First, a warm up game** for fun energy and waking up and getting rid of any baggage from the previous lesson. Someone may be up set, maybe they were on cover, or all got told off and are cross or wound up

Play fruit bowl

or get in line according to your date of birth

or zip zap boing

or rabbit ears or buzz

2.now calm down with

watching the breath or

picturing a beautiful rose

slowly uncurling or curling the hand

Ground rule: no meditation positions are ever allowed .Pupils sit straight on their chairs up right or it doesn't happen. Give them a choice ,calmly. Do it my way or not at all. If not, move out of the circle. Always, calmly. They will soon be eating out of your hand.

breathing and heart rate is now down. they have made the transition to a different way of learning and are ready to take today's message on board.

If there is a **saboteur** ask him or her if they would like to sit on their chair outside of the circle. They will either do this or join in. The student centered teacher remains calm, neutral, does not get angry but is totally firm. The teacher is very much in charge. The teacher's bottom lines must not be crossed.

3. Now begin the lesson topic for example, two aspects of the listening skills activity

Class do short exercises, moving chairs into rows and swapping roles. No time to get bored. Saboteurs stop the lesson. Give them the choice to leave the group, not outside the room, *never outside the room*. Continue with the activity.

4. Re make the circle

5. De brief carefully using thought out questions, or true false, or traffic lights.

7. Remind class how to re build the classroom. Everyone helps - there will be more furniture than people so don't just sit down.

8. When everyone is ready and you have five minutes to the bell

- Try scaling to see how everyone is feeling
- Play buzz or another quick thinking game, bearing in mind you are in rows.
- Bell goes, all stand
- Rock music
- Dismiss in rows

9. Say goodbye and well done, see you next week.

Teacher stands by the door, praising people, as they leave.

Great lesson!

Make this your routine, the topic and related activities are the parts that change and will take about half an hour to deliver and debrief.

It may seem that a lot of time is being wasted with moving furniture and playing games but when it is operating well and process awareness is high they are learning every single second ! How many lessons can you say that of ? and who nagged or got cross ? not you!

Lesson plans for beginning PSHCE

Aim: These are ways of building trust in the group and teaching or reminding groups who have been doing PSHCE for years of the ground rules. These lessons make take several weeks . You begin the programme of study when you think the pupils are ready to work together with trust and respect for each other and you. You decide when that is.

Remember, if this is a form who have been together for a while, it is still a new group ***because it has you in it.***

At key stage four They are new groups who are going to spend several lessons a week working together if sets are linked. We have discovered over the years that they do not know each others names ! PSHCE has a lot to offer in helping these groups get on together all through the week.

Outcome : Learning names, building trust, learning how to work in PSE

You may need to create a circle first . Tell the children where they need to put the furniture. Ground rule is ,**every piece is back where it is now**. It the children's responsibility to do this and make sure the room is perfect and litter free at the end.

Doing it to a lively track of music is good. Must be done by the time it is finished. Must include a chair for the teacher and no extra chairs. Must be a perfect circle so everyone can see everyone. Remember process is everything.

1.Learning names.

Call the register and greet each child.

Cushion throwing game:

Every one in the class has to take a turn.

Teacher throws cushion to another pupil calling their name as they do so. Each person who receives the cushion throws it to another calling their name.

- The skill is seeing everyone gets it just once

- No one is left out

Introduce the game carefully. Explain the purpose . We are beginning a process of being comfortable with each other .People could sabotage this - how could they do that ?

Leave people out , hit people with the cushion throw too hard . hit things in the room. I don't think there is anyone in the group who wants to do that .

Play the game.

Debrief; how well did we play that game ? did we include everyone? did we make sure no one was missed out? During our time in school there are lots of opportunities to make sure everyone is included. As you set up groups and activities look round to see if everyone has a group. Remember . Everyone is shy. Everyone is afraid of rejection.

We are not learning PSE if we do not treat people well in this lesson. Its how we treat each other that is the subject, not a set of facts. We may be learning facts but the how we do it is what its about otherwise we could just learn through worksheets and text books which we never do in PSE

2. **Next : initial responses** . practice names by asking each child in the room to respond to a question with an answer made from the letters of their name. Obviously, the answer doesn't have to be true ! its about fun and quick thinking.

- Sarah, what is your favourite food? Sausages.
- John what is your favourite hobby ? jogging.
- Lucy what is your favourite film? Lion King.
- You could play this like cushion throwing and have children ask the questions round the circle.

De brief: what did we learn by playing that game ?

Variation: The initial game . My name is Mollie and I like marzipan. My name is Sam and I like sausages, this is Mollie and she likes marzipan and so on round the circle. See who can remember everyone's name by the end!

3. Quick energiser much loved by the children is fruit bowl

Give every child a fruit name round the circle

Apple, orange, banana

Stand up and remove your chair so that there is one chair short.

Explain that when you call a fruit, all those fruits must change places, quickly to get a chair, teacher does, too. One person will be left in the middle, they have to call a fruit . Every so often can call fruit bowl which means that everyone changes places.

De brief. What has happened now ? everyone has changed places and lots of people suddenly found themselves in charge ! what did it feel like to suddenly be in the middle, scary ? might forget what to say ? It is like life . All our games are like life. They help us deal with situations in a fun way and practice for when we are out in the world.

When we do that we have to meet new people .We have to get on with them, whether we like it or not.

4. Meet my friend

Turn to the person on your left and ask them to introduce themselves to you. They might tell you who is in their family about pets and interests. Your job is to remember as much as you can about what they tell you . After a minute or two swap over. In a round each person introduces the other.

De brief: This is about listening to each other and also talking to the whole group.

This should take you to the end of the first lesson

It will be a few lessons before you feel the group are ready to start the programme of study.

Second Lesson

Look through the games and choose what you would like to play. You might want to warm up the second lesson with cushion throwing - perhaps you would like to vary it to learn the pupils names yourself . Everyone goes round the circle once giving their name and a fact about themselves like I likeand then you throw the cushion to one giving their name and the pupils throw it back to you and you go round the circle that way.

Then a quick **fruit bowl** and then into groups that are not self chosen for **a trust building game**. Such as **building a machine**.

Three minutes to build a machine such as aeroplane then shout freeze . Everyone looks at each group.

Then shout car

Then factory

Train.

Road

Table

De brief: Trust, co operation, fun. Who seemed like the leader ?any one ? who was the supporter , helper, problem solver saying why don't we ? teamwork is really key. We all have different skills but we are all important. We had to work with people we didn't choose . Just like at work.

Remember : everyone on an interview or up for promotion has similar qualifications - they wouldn't be there if they didn't ! It's the socially skilled person who gets the job. It is the friendly, warm, "I'll do it!" person who moves on, whingers who turn up late and don't keep to company policy don't.

Consider the skills you would like them to build up

Rule of the game is involving and supportive and great fun.

A child volunteers to go outside

- The rest of the class makes up a rule that everyone has to keep eg everyone wearing earrings will lie.
- Everyone with crossed legs will lie
- everyone with hair above the collar will lie.

The volunteer comes in and must find the rule which makes people

lie. They do this by asking a very obvious question that everyone can see the answer to such as are you wearing a blue shirt? They work out who is lying and then try to see what the rule is that makes the liars lie. It is particularly fun when the rule is something that can change like moving or touching a part of the body. You might have crossed legs the first time you are asked but not the second.

Move on then to trust building games like **fall back**

Sort into groups with games like matching the pieces of cut up Christmas cards or birthday cards or any pictures that you have photocopied. ie Give everyone a piece of a picture(have one picture for the number of groups) they have to find the other group members.

Or have sets of pizza ingredients ie base, tomato, olive ham, pepperoni pineapple give them all out at random class needs to form four to six pizzas and then works together. up and **building a machine** where children work in groups.

Or have them form a line from their birthdays in order youngest to oldest. Then count them off into groups

Debrief; Everyone has to talk to others to form the groups.

Fall back: everyone takes it in turns to fall back into the arms of a pair of students who catch them. Great trust needed. Use your judgement about this one.

Test trust and co operation as you go along with things like the **sitting down circle**. Everyone stands in a circle left arm facing in, then they all slowly sit down so that they end up on everyone's laps - the trick is to see if they can do this without falling over - terrific fun ! ask if they want to do this first - if they do, trust and bonding is good , if they don't then more work to do. If just one or two are edgy ask them to be observers. See how long it is until everyone wants to join in

De brief : what did this test ?how did it feel?

Lesson Three and subsequent lessons

There are a number of sets of games for you to look through. The last section is from Donna Brandes' books of games. These are games for deeper learning. The learning is particularly secure when they are properly debriefed. If we do not, then it just becomes entertainment.

At key stage three, it is helpful to begin most lessons with a quick energiser. Like **zip zap boing** or **rabbit ears**. Possibly do **fruit bowl** or **five pins** in the middle as an energiser if people are flagging. There are lots of circle games with pupils miming and passing on actions or sounds which all build teamwork and quick thinking and help people not to feel self conscious.

PSE should be fast paced and fun. Then people can settle down to the serious stuff.

All classes should be able to keep ground rules. Year seven begins with these in detail. Other classes need to be reminded.

- Listen to the speaker
- Eye contact
- Positive body language
- No interruptions
- No put downs.

After a few lessons if and when you feel people are ready you might like to invite them to take part in a special circle.

Ask them first

Invite them to bring in their most special object or perhaps most special photograph to share in the circle. Everyone has the right to pass. Everyone is listened to respectfully. Everything said about the photo is confidential. Teacher joins in if they wish and perhaps starts. Other pupils should not be told about any of the things shared. If pupils want to do it, then it can be a very moving bonding lesson which changes the atmosphere permanently. It is a risk. It works very well in GCSE RE where children have chosen the subject and see each other three times a week. It may not be appropriate use your judgement.

If induction can end with this special circle you will have some wonderful lessons ahead. If it doesn't, remember you cannot solve difficult group dynamics in just one lesson a week so be prepared to compromise while not giving up !

Enjoy yourself!

A good unit to follow on from this would be the one on communication skills, also available on this website.